A Book of Conquest

THE *CHACHNAMA* AND MUSLIM ORIGINS IN SOUTH ASIA

Manan Ahmed Asif

THE QUESTION OF HOW ISLAM arrived in India remains markedly contentious in South Asian politics. Standard accounts center on the Umayyad caliphate's incursions into Sind and littoral western India in the eighth century CE. In this telling, Muslims were a foreign presence among native Hindus, sowing the seeds of a mutual animosity that presaged the subcontinent's partition into Pakistan and India many centuries later.

But in a compelling reexamination of the history of Islam in India, Manan Ahmed Asif directs attention to a thirteenth-century text that tells the story of Chach, the Brahmin ruler of Sind, and his kingdom's later conquest by the Muslim general Muhammad bin Qasim in 712 CE. The *Chachnama* has long been a touchstone of Indian history, yet it is seldom studied in its entirety. Asif offers a close and complete analysis of this important text, untangling its various registers and genres in order to reconstruct the political vision at its heart.

Asif challenges the main tenets of the *Chachnama*'s interpretation: that it is a translation of an earlier Arabic text and that it presents a history of conquest. Debunking both ideas, he demonstrates that the *Chachnama* was originally Persian and, far from advancing a narrative of imperial aggression, is a subtle and sophisticated work of political theory, one embedded in both the Indic and Islamic ethos. This social and intellectual history of the *Chachnama* is an important corrective to the divisions between Muslim and Hindu that so often define Pakistani and Indian politics today.

For Shaista Ahmed

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Note on Transliteration and Translation

The primary textual sources under review in this book are written in Arabic, Persian, Urdu, Hindi, and Sanskrit—with Arabic words often appearing either in Persian texts or in Urdu texts. A further complication to adopting a specific transliteration schema is the different vocal emphasis in pronouncing Persian and Arabic terms in contemporary South Asia. To promote wider reception of this work, I have removed all diacritical marks, indicating only the presence of the letters *hamza* with an apostrophe (') and *‘ayn* with a reverse apostrophe (‘). The Persian *iẓāfa* is indicated as -i. The Arabic definite article is omitted from proper names (e.g., Baladhuri and not al-Balādhurī). However, when citing sources, I have left the text unaltered. Place names are specific to the historical period and reflect usage in primary sources—most importantly, Sind rather than Sindh, Uch rather than Uchch or Uch Sharif. All translations, unless otherwise indicated, are mine. All dates are of the Common Era (CE) unless otherwise noted.

Introduction

BEGINNINGS are a seductive necessity. The interest in beginnings is not new—narratives of origins and genealogies frame much of the recorded past. Yet, for the modern nation, the romance of origins and the gravitas of a unique genealogy are imperative. For the modern state, such stories offer the pride of modernity and of linear progress (the perpetual *-ing* to the First World). For the citizens of these modern states, these stories, illustrated in textbooks, contain values, morals, and national character. In America, for example, the Founding Fathers represent the beginnings of this nation in myriad and ever-present ways. The statues of Alexander Hamilton or Thomas Jefferson in front of academic or state buildings, in public parks, at crossroads, gesture at specific origins of the state. These statues act as personifications of static moments of origins—a teleology and an ethic. In Germany, Arminius; in France, Charlemagne; in England, King Arthur; in India, Asoka; and so on across the globe.[1] Some of these origins perform affective tasks (the committee of men who gave birth to the United States are meant to invoke in its citizens feelings of filial love), while others help constitute an always renewable past (the rediscovery of Genghis Khan as a hero for leaders in former Soviet states is meant to invoke a pre-communist past).

A Question of Origins

The question of origins was significant for the European inquiry into the pasts of the world in general and colonized people in particular. In Enlightenment thought—from Descartes to Vico to Kant—the study of Europe's own origins necessitated equally an inquiry into the origins of the New World or of India or China. These "scientific" inquiries into origins of language (philology) and origins of human society (history) created, by the later eighteenth century, a vast body of philosophical and ethnographic material about the colonized and Orientalized world. It is in this set of inquiries that my project begins.

I am concerned here with a particular story of beginnings—that of Muslims in India—and the ways in which it structures the reading of Muslim pasts in South Asia. At its barest this narrative asserts that Islam is fundamentally Arabian and hence, geographically foreign to India. This outsider origin of the faith makes its adherents outsiders as well. Muslims thus come from the outside to India: either as foreign conquerors or foreign traders or foreign proselytizers, all distinct from the "indigenous." In this beginning, there are a number of points of origins—one is in the early-eighth-century campaigns from Arabia to Sind under Muhammad bin Qasim; another is in the eleventh-century campaigns from Ghazni to Gujarat under Mahmud of Ghazni; another, in the sixteenth-century campaign from Kabul to Delhi by Zahiruddin Babar. These multiple points of origins act as constant renewals of foreignness in this beginning story, and, paradoxically, these diverse renewals feed a monolithic, ahistorical, atemporal Islam in India. Critically, the history of political states in India (tagged Muslim) encompasses the social and cultural lives of all who claim any variety of Islam as their faith.

In this book, I take aim at a particular origins narrative of a Muslim political state in India—the 712 expedition of Muhammad bin Qasim to Sind—to expose its historical specificity and the way it was employed in later reconstructions. What is at stake when we question this origin and revisit the history that is outside of it? I submit that certain "infallible" social and political frameworks fall apart and newness emerges.

First, let me demonstrate the power and dominance of this origins narrative in South Asia. This narrative positing the Muslim as always distinctly an outsider is one of the primary ideological fulcra that resulted in the 1947 Partition of colonial India. One articulation of this idea was expressed in 1940 by Mohammad Ali Jinnah, leader of the All India Muslim League and the first governor general of Pakistan:

> The Hindus and Muslims belong to two different religious philosophies, social customs, and literature[s]. They neither intermarry nor interdine together, and indeed they belong to two different civilisations which are based mainly on conflicting ideas and conceptions. Their aspects on life, and of life, are different. It is quite clear that Hindus and Mussalmans derive their inspiration from different sources of history. They have different epics, their heroes are different, and they have different episode[s]. Very often the hero of one is a foe of the other, and likewise their victories and defeats overlap.[2]

Jinnah's articulation of difference in regard to the past (an articulation that mirrored early twentieth-century Muslim nationalism) incongruently posits cultural practices as uniform across a vast geography. That is, the Muslims do not marry or dine with non-Muslims either in the present or in the past—the Muslims *everywhere* in India constitute a unitary body. In support of this reading of the present, Jinnah asserts a difference in history and in historiography—that these two communities have different pasts, and they have different sources for those pasts and must therefore interpret history differently. Hence to someone who may say that the Mughal elite intermarried with non-Muslims, Jinnah's answer would be that we must interpret their acts in accordance with different civilizational standards or look for their depictions in different archives.

Like Jinnah's nationalism, Hindu communalism also looked to the past, also relied on historiography, and also argued numerically, but with a radically different view of the past and the future. Hence in 1940, the conservative and militant proponents of Hindu supremacy such as V. D. Savarkar and M. S. Golwalkar would reinterpret the heroes and the foes: "Ever since that evil day, when Moslems first landed in Hindusthan, right up to the present moment, the Hindu Nation has been gallantly fighting on to shake off the despoilers."[3] For the Hindu Right, the "foreign" origins of Muslims in India demonstrated their "indigenous" struggle against conquest and domination: each new arrival of the Muslims was another war of attrition. After Partition, the consequences of this understanding of the past became evident in 1992. A sixteenth-century mosque, the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya, was taken apart brick by brick by thousands who believed it to be birthplace of the God Ram. In this destruction, the conflation of historical and mythic time was not an accident or a divergence—it represented the culmination of a decades-long utilization of this origins myth for the Hindu Right.

These two threads of understanding pasts—Jinnah's insistence on separatism and the Hindu Right's insistence on avenging past wrongs—are distinct and produce vastly different trajectories for the future. Yet they each begin with the idea of Muslims as outsiders, they each narrate events across a thousand years of history that insist on that difference, and they each rely on the other's contrary reading.[4] This origins narrative has prompted contemporary violence, absolved it, and argued for a recognition of an always-there difference. The hero of one and the foe of another are at battle—"the civilization of conquest is also the civilization of defeat"—the two modes are in syncopation.[5] The ledgers of victories and defeats are kept separately, but the regime of tabulation is same. For each, the "foreign" produces that which can save or that from which one needs to be saved. For each, the difference of the present stems from a difference in origins. In effect, how different groups of Muslims at a given point in time came to political dominance in India is viewed solely through the lens of conquest by outsiders—what I am here labeling as the origins narrative.

The critique of Indic pasts understood as a long teleology of violence between communities has been the work of many historians. Several generations of historians, of the ancient or medieval or modern periods, have taken on the question of difference in Indic pasts. Romila Thapar, Gyanendra Pandey, Uma Chakravarti, Richard Eaton, Cynthia Talbot, and Shahid Amin are some of the key figures in this historiography whose efforts were to trace the emergence of categories of being Hindu or Muslim—beyond the invention of such modes during colonial rule.[6] One answer for contemporary turbulences, they offer, is to understand the multiplicity of *being* Indian that history provides. While this marking of the colonial construction of the communalist past was a critical intervention, what remained unexamined was the centrality of the origins narrative—the naturalness with which "Muslims" remained outsiders—such that each historical epoch began anew (for example, for the medieval historians there remains an assumption that Mughal ideology and politics bore little relationship to that of their Indic predecessors, or similarly the Delhi sultanate bore no relationship to the Arab rule in Sind).[7] That is, even though historians demonstrated that the colonial state constructed the antagonistic forms in which difference was naturalized between communities, they did not push against the ways in which the origins narrative governed understandings of the past. The consequence was that arguments for an anodyne syncretism kept in place the fundamental difference between the communities.

Whether one looks for syncretism or antagonism, the impulse to create a teleology of Muslim presence is remarkably persistent in the origins narrative of the history and historiography of South Asia. Historians of Pakistan focused on specific moments: the conquests of the eighth or the eleventh century, the late Mughal period, and north India from the nineteenth century onward. Those Muslims, and Muslim pasts, left in Indian territory were also left out of Pakistani historiography. Historians of northern India left out from their inquiries the Muslim history before the thirteenth century, for that geography was now in Pakistani territory. The historians of southern India similarly elided any discussion of communities of settlement, trading, and being Muslim throughout the medieval and early modern periods.[8] What governs these complementary silences is the physical partition of political and social space in contemporary South Asia as well as the intellectual partition of archival pasts. What motivates it is the beginnings narrative of Muslim origins. These are the unique challenges faced by any intellectual history of premodern India—of time, space, and beginnings.

This book is an argument against origins. It takes as an imperative that "origin *must* itself be known historically, history *must* itself resolve the problem of history, knowledge *must* turn its sting against itself."[9] In taking aim at the origins narrative, I pinpoint the text most critically important for its construction—*Chachnama*. I present the ways in which this thirteenth-century Persian text became, in colonial understanding, a history of Muslim origins. I aim to locate in historical time this history of thought about the origins of Islam in India. However, I turn to the text, and the thirteenth century, to show other modes of understanding difference that lie outside of this origins narrative. This then is the crux of the book at hand. If modern politics created India and Pakistan and Bangladesh out of political difference enacted by colonialism, then modern historiography continues to take these differences to be just as natural, as normative, and as entrenched. My examination of a specific medieval past shows how the origins narrative came to determine the limits of historical inquiry and the paths it has foreclosed.

Chachnama as Origins

In 1981, V. S. Naipaul visited Karachi to report on postcolonial Muslim states. There, he read *Chachnama* "in a paperback reprint of the English translation first published in 1900 in Karachi."[10]

> The *Chachnama* is in many ways like *The Conquest of New Spain* by Bernal Díaz del Castillo, the Spanish soldier who in his old age wrote of his campaigns in Mexico with Cortés in 1519 and after. The theme of both works is the same: the destruction, by an imperialist power with a strong sense of a mission and a wide knowledge of the world, of a remote culture that knows only itself and doesn't begin to understand what it is fighting.[11]

Naipaul read *Chachnama* as "an account of the Islamic beginning of the state [of Pakistan]." This beginning, Naipaul argued in his book, was the primary way in which the hegemonic Muslims of Pakistan imagined their separation from India—as conquerors—and *Chachnama* was the text that provided the history of their conquest. In Naipaul's reading, there was a belligerence of colonial gaze in Pakistan's conception of its historic past. Naipaul read violence in the figure of Qasim, the young conqueror described in *Chachnama* as the leader of the Arab army that conquered Sind. He narrated the atrocities committed by the Arab army—their destruction of temples or their killing of civilians—and linked them to the atrocities of Pakistan's teeming Muslims since 1971 War for Bangladesh.

Pakistan in 1981 was only a decade old. Previously, it was "West Pakistan," the geographically separated other of "East Pakistan." In 1971, the country went through a civil war, and the bloodied eastern half emerged as Bangladesh. With the violent birth of Bangladesh, the Muslims of Pakistan, first partitioned along religious lines, had now repartitioned along ethnic and linguistic lines. Naipaul correctly identified the resurgent origins narrative that the Pakistani state claimed for itself: that Pakistan was founded not in 1947 but in 712 AD. Where Naipaul saw colonial destruction, the Pakistani state saw righteous domination of their faith over the unbelievers. The *Class VI Social Studies Textbook*, first published in 1979 as part of General Zia ul-Haq's educational imperative, demonstrates this reading in the chapter "First Citizen" and provides the officially sanctioned story:

> Before the dawn of Islam, the trade relations had been setup [*sic*] between India and the Arabs. The Muslims invaded the subcontinent in 712 A.D. Prior to this the Arabs used to visit this land for the sale & [*sic*] purchase of their goods. The Arab traders were staunch Muslims and therefore taught Islam to the people of India. A number of Arab traders had also settled in Sri Lanka and due to trade had good relations with the people. With the passage of time some of the traders died. The Raja of Sri Lanka who was kind hearted, he sent the widows and their children and belongings on eight ships along with gifts for the Muslim caliph. When these ships reached near the port of Debal the pirates plundered these ships. The Arab women and children were made captives. Some of the Muslims managed to escape and made aware of Hajjaj bin Yousaf of the entire incident. Conflict between the Arabs and ruler of Sind started due to this incident. Hajjaj bin Yusuf sent Muhammad bin Qasim to conquer Sind. This was the foundation of Pakistan.[12]

As I will detail in a subsequent chapter, this particular emphasis on Islam's origins in South Asia, and the usage of the specific example of assault on Muslim women, can be traced to the work of historians who wrote these textbooks—I. H. Qureshi and S. M. Ikram—as part of a select state-sanctioned group responsible for creating the constitutive texts and policies for Pakistan. Their work built on an earlier generation of Muslim historians and writers, such as Abdul Halim Sharar, Syed Sulaiman Nadvi, and Nadvi's teacher Shibli Nau'mani, who focused on the early history of Islam in South Asia. These figures had focused on early Islam for a variety of reasons, but a primary concern was to respond to colonial histories of India. The arrival of the Muslims in the eighth century, as conquerors, and their subsequent colonization of India had been a dominant framework for British colonial histories such that Vincent A. Smith, M. Elphinstone, H. M. Elliot, and the early James Mill saw a clear temporal divide between indigenous/Hindu India and foreign/Muslim India.

The thread that runs through this genealogy of transmissions is *Chachnama*. For two hundred years, it has been read as a book of conquest, providing a narrative of Islam's arrival in India. For hundreds of years, it has been understood to be a work of translation into Persian around 1226 CE, from an earlier eighth-century history written in Arabic. Such interpretations of *Chachnama* underpin the specialized work done by generations of scholars—all of whom maintained the primacy of *Chachnama* as a textual translation of an earlier historical narrative. The consequence of this reading is that *Chachnama* is understood to be the primary account of the origins of Muslims in India which contains the history of their rise to dominance.

The idea of *Chachnama* as the key origins text continues to hold wide sway, and the origins narrative continues to provide justifications for violent corrections. On February 25, 2006, a young Pakistani professional in Connecticut, Faisal Shahzad, sent an email message under the subject "My Beloved and Peaceful Ummah." He wrote,

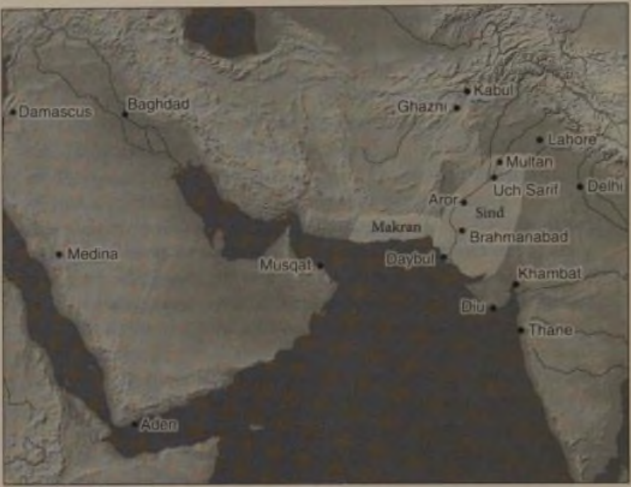
> 17 year old Mohammad bin Qasam [*sic*] attacked the Sub-continent Pak-o-Hind and defeated infidel ruler Raja Dahir because there came to him news of a Muslim woman who was raped!!! and today our beloved Prophet (Katimum Nabieen Mohammad al-Ameen) PBUH has been disrespected and disgraced in the whole world and we just sit and watch with shame and sorrow and most of us don't even care.[13]

This email message surfaced after Shahzad's failed bombing in Times Square in early 2010. It clearly communicates Shahzad's reaction to the controversy that ensued after Danish newspapers published cartoons of Muhammad. Another cause for invocations of violence against women as the originary moment for Islam in India was the incarceration of Aafia Siddiqui—a professional chemist who was eventually convicted of conspiring with al-Qaeda. "I wish that this nation had a Muhammad bin Qasim who could hear the screams of Aafia Siddiqui, and help her. We need him and his army," wrote Javed Chaudhry, a heavily syndicated Urdu columnist, in the *Daily Jang* in December 2008.[14] Another commentator raised the specter of a "Muhammad bin Qasim of the pen" who is needed to mobilize support for this "daughter of Islam."[15] The event described (the rape of a Muslim woman taken prisoner) is part of the origins narrative. It is presented as a particular genesis for political action within a coherent moral narrative taken from *Chachnama*.[16] Clearly these many invocations of a past glory are an attempt to address a present historical trauma.[17] What interests me is the strength and tensile nature of this particular event from all historical pasts available to Muslims in South Asia.

Chachnama constituted as an origins narrative in British colonial histories, was then examined by Indian nationalists, and was subsequently appropriated by the Pakistani nation-state to denote the true account of Islam's arrival in India. It has widely been understood to contain the story of the conquest of India and also to provide a rationale for a community or a state.

Rereading *Chachnama*

From colonial historians came the dominant framework for interpreting *Chachnama:* first, that its primary value was as a source for the eighth-century accounts of Muhammad bin Qasim because it was a translation of an earlier, no longer extant Arabic history; and second, that anything that could not be mined for historical facts was romantic gibberish clotting the text. These assumptions led the nationalist historians to treat *Chachnama* as a carrier text (it carries within it an older, more reliable text) which had to be carefully stripped bare and reassembled into a "historically accurate" narrative. Such an approach removed any need to read the text as a whole, examine the moral universe


Damascus
Baghdad
Ghazni
Kabul
Lahore
Multan
Uch Sarif
Delhi
Aror
Sind
Makran
Brahmanabad
Medina
Musqat
Daybul
Khambat
Diu
Thane
Aden

Map of the regions of medieval Sind, Gujarat, and Arabia. (Map © Manan Ahmed Asif and J. C. Trinidad-Christensen.)

created, or even place it within the landscape of Uch. It became a universalized conquest narrative of early Islam. Such oversights found little correction. This limited and misleading reading of *Chachnama* as primarily a history of the eighth century became standard.

Hence, nationalist historians like Mohammad Habib (1895–1971) dismissed in entirety the pre-Islamic section of the *Chachnama* and enthusiastically embraced the rest as an authentic source for the eighth-century Muslim conquest: "We may, therefore, confidently trust the Chach Nama as the safest of guides of the invasion."[18] Even those with more skepticism were willing to parse out the historical truth from the romantic. R. C. Majumdar (1888–1980) declared *Chachnama* to contain "a kernel of historical facts," though it needed fact checking from archaeological and textual sources.[19] The portions of

Chachnama that did not speak directly to Muhammad bin Qasim's conquest were considered redundant and discardable, as Hodivala commented:

> The whole of the first part of the work is overgrown with legendary matter and all but valueless as history. . . . It may have some basis in the flotsam and jetsam of local tradition, but if so, the tradition has been so grossly corrupted in the course of transmission by the fantastic accretions of subsequent inventiveness, as to amount to a travesty of the truth.[20]

Chachnama had already inherited from the colonial historians a marked valence as a politically sensitive text unveiling the destruction of the golden age of India (pre-Muslim classical period) by the invading Muslims, and the subsequent ushering in of India's dark ages (the medieval period). In the backdrop of this historiographical debate—as the discussion over the destruction of Somanath exemplified—*Chachnama* had to be read as a history of the eighth century and not as a history of the thirteenth century, during which it was produced. This view of the hidden historical value of *Chachnama* crystallizes in the works of postcolonial scholars such as H. T. Lambrick, Peter Hardy, and Yohanan Friedmann.[21]

They chose to systematically and thoroughly separate the history from the "flotsam and jetsam" that surrounded it. Names of people and places, dates of events, and actions of political, religious or sociocultural significance were teased out and carefully compared with biographical dictionaries, histories, and chronicles, where available. The notion of *Chachnama* as a carrier text became the overarching consensus of the field. The fact that the majority of *Chachnama* cannot be corroborated from any other source—textual or otherwise—is dealt with by relying on ʿAli Kufi's own testimony that his text is a translation from an earlier Arabic text, as Friedmann notes:

> Though numerous other persons who appear in the Chach Nāma are not to be located easily in Arab historiography, one has the distinct impression that Kūfī had the Arab tradition at his disposal and used it extensively. The Chach Nāma thus seems to be the only extant

> book which contains the detailed Arab tradition regarding the conquest of Sind.[22]

From within this framework, the historian sifts through the romantic for the historical and builds a cohesive argument for what happened in India's Muslim past. The best of such scholarship, such as Derryl N. Maclean's *Religion and Society in Arab Sind*, goes beyond *Chachnama* to add markedly important insights into the eighth-century world, but the ill effects of unmooring *Chachnama* from the Uch of the early thirteenth century remains. Irfan Habib, for example, mined it for linguistic traces of Indic concepts—a method that requires the understanding that it is indeed a carrier text.[23]

I will not detail here every postcolonial work that utilized the historicity of *Chachnama*, but a recent, popular introductory history textbook calls it the "the principal source of our information on the Muslim conquest of Sind" and summarizes the consensus thus:

> The *Chachnama*, the principal source of our information on the Muslim conquest of Sind, elaborates a royal code which demands sensitivity to the fluidity and shifting nature of the real world of politics. This is in contrast to Kautilya's "classical" and largely theoretical text *Arthashastra* which advises princes on ways to avoid the dilution of absolute and centralized power.[24]

To sum up the verdict on *Chachnama* then: it is a political history of the eighth century that allows us to trace some empirical or linguistic or legal understanding of the eighth century. It is not a text of political theory and not one to be read within its own site of production as a particular act of agentive politics, with its own political and social goals.

What Is *Chachnama*?

Chachnama is a Persian prose work. It was written by ʿAli Kufi in 1226 CE in the political capital of the region of Sind, the city of Uch.[25] It describes the history of the regions of Sind (in north India) from roughly 680 CE to 716 CE. It tells the story of the Hindu Brahmin King Chach (hence, *Chach+nama*, or *The Book of Chach*) who ruled in Sind. It also recounts the history of the Muslim commander Muhammad bin Qasim, who established a Muslim polity in Sind. Uch currently lies about 70 km north of the mega port-city of Karachi in Pakistan. Kufi titled his text *The Book of Stories of the King Dahir bin Chach bin Sila'ij and His Death at the Hands of Muhammad bin Qasim*, but it became known as *Chachnama*. The oldest extant manuscript of *Chachnama* is dated 1651 CE and is currently in Punjab University's collection in Lahore.[26] There are copies of the manuscript in the Talpur collection in Hyderabad Sind, in the Rampur collection, in Bankipur, and at the British Library in London. The recensions mostly date from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The first translation of an entire manuscript of *Chachnama* into English was done by the Sindhi dramatist and translator Mirza Kalichbeg Fredunbeg (1853–1929) in 1900.[27] This remains the only full English translation of the text—albeit based on seven or eight manuscripts, not including the oldest, which was discovered later. The first printing of the Persian text was done by 'Umar bin Muhammad Daudpota in 1939.[28] The Persian critical edition that I have relied upon for this study was produced by Nabi Baksh Khan Baloch in 1982 under the aegis of the Institute of Islamic History, Culture, and Civilization in Islamabad.[29]

The narrative of *Chachnama*, broadly sketched, is as follows: *Chachnama* begins in the city of Aror, in lower Sind, and concerns the rise to power of a young and talented Brahmin, Chach bin Sila'ij. It presents the political and social conditions at Aror prior to Chach's arrival at the capital, his employment as a secretary for the king's chief minister, and the young queen's infatuation with him. The queen orchestrates Chach's capture of the throne after the death of the king. After becoming the king, Chach embarks on a campaign to reconquer "the four quarters" of Sind. *Chachnama* details the taking of forts, enacting of agreements, and treatment of Buddhist and Hindu subjects. Chach establishes a successful polity in Sind. After a long rule he dies, and there is a struggle between his two sons—Dahar and Daharsia—for the throne. Dahar becomes the king of Aror after manipulating the throne away from his brother. Dahar's polity welcomes Arab rebels, pirates, and roaming warlords, becoming a particular problem for the Muslim state in Iraq.

This account takes up the first third of *Chachnama* and has three overarching themes: the basis of legitimacy for the ruler, the good counsel of the advisor, and the need to create a justly governed polity.

ʿAli Kufi then introduces the second portion of his text under the heading "A History from the Righteously Guided Caliphs to Walid." It begins with the time of ʿUmar (r. 634–644 CE) and describes the Muslim campaigns to Hind and Sind. Short accounts of governors dispatched to various fronts in Makran, Zabulistan, and Qandahar are followed by descriptions of rebellious Muslim groups fleeing to the frontier.[30] Kufi details the ʿAlawi revolts and the amassing of troops in Sind who were conspiring against the state in Damascus. To counter these groups and to assert political control over the region, the governor of Iraq, Hajjaj bin Yusuf, dispatches the young commander Muhammad bin Qasim to Sind in 711 CE. Qasim begins by capturing the fort of Armabil in Makran and then lays siege to the port city of Daybul. After the conquest of Daybul, he takes the forts of Nerun. The battle with Raja Dahar occurs by the banks of the river Indus. After Dahar's defeat, Qasim proceeds to Aror, Brahmanabad, and finally Multan. The narrative concludes with the description of the death of Qasim, which comes at the orders of the caliph in Baghdad after the daughters of Dahar accuse Qasim of sexual violence against them. *Chachnama* ends with a short dedication and a prayer from Kufi.

In this portion of *Chachnama*, Qasim's campaign is a deliberate shadowing of the campaigns that Chach undertook to the "four quarters" of Sind. The major themes remain good counsel, good governance, and the need for a coherent political theory for a polity. Hence, the text contains speeches detailing policy and taxation, private conversations between commanders, dreams and prophecies, more than forty epistles between various protagonists, and statements on political theory and governance that include descriptions of appointments of non-Muslims to administrative and ceremonial positions. All of this is interspersed in the methodical military march of Chach and Qasim through the cities of medieval Sind.

This is *Chachnama*—a tale, a history, a romance, a lesson—set in the late seventh and early eighth centuries. It is the tale of Chach and Qasim, two young men who strive to establish an ethical polity in Sind but whose work is undone by the greed and lust of others. Kufi tells us in the preface that he translated an older Arabic account of the Muslim campaigns of the eighth century into Persian in order to gain favor at the court of Nasiruddin Qabacha (r. 1206–1226). *Chachnama* was written in Uch, the then capital of Qabacha's polity in northern India.

Why did ʿAli Kufi imagine a distant past in the early thirteenth century? What is the articulated and transformational life of this text? How is this text to be understood as participating in the history of thought in the thirteenth century?[31] I make two essential claims in this book: that *Chachnama*, central to the origins myth of Islam in South Asia, is not a work of translation, and it is not a book of conquest. Rejecting the origins narrative allows me to also jettison the hegemonic reading of this text, opening up the possibility to read it as a text of political theory.

The work of rereading *Chachnama* begins with the understanding that *Chachnama* needs to be examined in its entirety, and its varied genres and registers need to be untangled, to understand the political vision of the text. The reading of the text as a whole is a necessary methodological step because *Chachnama* entered the archive for British Orientalists and historians miscataloged, mistaken, and missing the full body of its text. Starting with Alexander Dow in 1782, segments of the text mainly concerning its "Muslim" portions, were translated and reproduced in antiquarian articles and broad histories. These excerpts were labeled as "history" and were read at face value, solely to answer the question of what happened in the early eighth century. Such was the radical consequence of reading *Chachnama* as a translation and a text foreign to India that an inquiry into Islam's origins could summarily disregard any "pre-Islamic" portion of this text.

So it occurred that in the work of British Orientalists and the historians who followed (specifically the nationalist and social schools), *Chachnama* became the social, philological, and historical foundation for a unitary understanding of Islam's origins. Scholars did the careful work of Arabic philology to ascertain the urtext. They were guided by the unerring belief that the historical truth is clearest when it is closest to the historical time of the event. Modern scholarship scanned sentences for "facts" that were then compiled in relation to other textual facts and were made to stand in for the truth of the origins. The actors in the text—no matter their textual or historical specificity—became the heroes and villains of the present. However, I argue that *Chachnama* is not a conquest narrative about Islam's origins on the Indian subcontinent. Rather, it is a prescriptive text advocating for a dialogical present for its thirteenth-century world and a political system that encompasses diversity in that present. It does so by drawing upon rich textual traditions from Sanskrit, Arabic, and Persian that were available to the learned audiences of the time.

To situate *Chachnama* means to read the text from the historical site of production and to look at the landscape from the text's perspective. I advance an argument in the book that the study of the medieval past of India ought to incorporate the perspective of the post-colonized and post-partitioned subjects of contemporary South Asia. The historian of modern India, modern Pakistan, modern Bangladesh, and modern Afghanistan keenly considers the ways in which the 1947 or 1971 partitions affect their work—the splitting of languages, archives, monuments, communities. The medieval historian, in contrast, has remained sanguine in the face of these critical divisions of documentary and lived evidence of the past.

The central concern animating the book is, how do we read a text through space and read a space through a text. By space, I mean the physical geography (landscape, town, routes, region) as well as the conceptual space—such as *dar* (region), *bilad* (state), *desh* (country), *mulk* (nation). By text, I mean the manuscript, the printed paper as well as the cultural memory, and the material remains of the past. *Why* did the *Chachnama* persist in cultural and political memory through the last eight centuries? I answer that question by treating the *Chachnama* as a living text—embedding it in the material and cultural history of contemporary Uch and engaging with its cultural memory. This work is spatial and textual, but it is augmented through my engagement with the ethnographic and the archeo-topographic (the built environment, the living remains of the past, and the habitation of people). Over three years (2009–2012), I spent months walking in Uch. My aim was to reimagine the thirteenth century site of production of *Chachnama*—a world in which the sites of power were neither Delhi nor Lahore, neither London nor Islamabad. To think with Uch as a political center of a world in transition is to reimagine the conceptual geography of north

India. After all, it was from Uch that Qabacha sent governors to Diu in Gujarat; and it was to Uch that trade and traffic came from Kabul, Makran, and Muscat.

It was from reading very different texts written in medieval Uch—sacral, poetic, historical—that I was able to see the world of *Chachnama* as an Indian Ocean world constitutive of Muscat and of Gujarat. The circulation of people, of ideas, and of artifacts in this region of the Indian Ocean ecumene shaped the stories contained in *Chachnama* and shaped the questions that I am asking of the text.[32] The presence of sacral sites in Uch are indicative of a long history of arrivals—of religious, political, and trading communities. That their material and archaeological remains are still inhabited and cared for demonstrates that this is a space where the past has remained a significant part of self-identity. Yet the cultural memory of Uch and its current economic and political life are at great odds. How do the material remains of a forgotten capital shape the contours of research on medieval India? Our presentist historiography occludes new modes of questioning the past and creates spatial and temporal divisions that seem natural but actually hide past realities. The textual materials historians use to study medieval pasts are distended from their sites of production. The archives now exist in London, Berlin, or Cambridge and manuscripts are often studied without due attention to their spatial and textual history. Such inquiries create a false geography of the past. My field of inquiry thus encompassed the text, the afterlife of the text, and the method of the historian. I saw that an examination of *Chachnama* and its afterlife puts into stark relief the limits of how we conceive of the past. Understanding how an unreading of the origins narrative, and a reading of its political purpose, opens up historical questions is the main work of this book.

A methodology of medievalists walking in landscapes of ruins—and extracting lessons for the present or future—is part and parcel of the post-Rankian historical enterprise. Precisely when it comes to re-creating past imperial hubris, we can recall the French encounter with the Egyptian ruins, such as case of Constantin-François Volney's *Voyage en Egypte et en Syrie* (1787) followed by his influential *Les Ruines, ou Méditations sur les Révolutions des Empires* (1791), which posited decline from the material ruins of his contemporary observances of cities in the Levant.[33] Or we can imagine Edward Gibbon walking in Roman ruins in Italy and framing the question of "decline." Or we can imagine Arnaldo Momigliano later walking among those same ruins and launching a critique of historiography and the politics of empire.[34]

Yet Uch is not a ruin and should not be understood as such.[35] It is certainly the case that topography—the slow rise and sharp jut of its mounds, interspersed with pathways—is dotted with medieval and early modern structures which attract a traffic of believers and supplicants. It is certainly also true that large portions of its landscape act as sarcophagi, with graveyards shaded by living trees and traversed by the footpaths. Yet this is not the topography of ruins, frozen in time, asking to be interpreted through the prism of presentist concerns. The mounds of Uch break up the flat plains of southern rural Punjab and offer striking views of distant horizons. The graves amassed next to doorsteps make one feel closer to the earth. The shrines are social hubs of great import that maintain lively traffic. The analytical gaze then has to respond to this liveliness, this lived-in-ness, and this particular presence of active pasts.

The analytical gaze needs to be structured differently than the gaze offered by Gibbon or Momigliano.[36] It was through my engagement with Walter Benjamin—specifically the ideas of Benjamin in his writings on Paris and Berlin in the nineteenth century—that I formed a methodological framework that would not reduce Uch to a picturesque background for a study of *Chachnama* or see it as site of nostalgic recuperation.[37] In the two small texts on Paris and Berlin, Benjamin asks us to think about the creation of social spaces as interpellations of stories, interior and observed, as informing the reading of the text.[38] In my encounters with the landscape of Uch, the presence of the past—never the same past—impressed upon me the need to begin thinking about *Chachnama* as a text produced with a distinct idea of a center and to think about the spatial understanding of the past it encompasses through its depictions of material and natural landscape. Hence, I came to observe Uch as the political and spiritual center it was at the time of the production of *Chachnama*. This allowed me to locate interpretative footholds in the text itself.

These walks in Uch attuned me to stories connected to specific sites, to nature, and to landscape in particular. The sacral, historical, and political geographies of Uch constitute a symbiotic relationship. Varied texts such as *Chachnama* from 1226, Sufi Makhdum Jahaniyan's *Safarnama* from 1350, Mir Muhammad Masum Bhakkari's *Ta'rikh-i Ma'sumi* from 1600, and Mir ʿAli Shir-Qaniʿi's *Tuhfat-ul Kiram* from 1788 are called upon to accentuate the historical past and to provide explanations for the present. Events, personalities, descriptions, and objects from these historical sources are part of everyday conversations. It is common to hear of Makhdum Jahaniyan's gift to Firuz Shah Tughluq of the handprint of the Prophet, which cemented both his rule and that of his descendants in Delhi.[39]

A series of forts built in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries dot the adjoining Cholistan desert between Uch and Ahmadabad in Gujarat. The forts—Derawar, Islamgarh, Mirgarh, Jamgarh, Khangarh, Khairgarh, and Ramgarh—are central to the imagined landscape of Uch although the international border between India and Pakistan has rendered that route impassable for seven decades. Though the forts stretch into the Rajasthan desert, the stories in Uch are linked to those on the other side of the border. These memories of a route traveled via camels by pilgrims, traders, merchants, and soldiers continue to inform the rhythms of life in Uch. The invocations of these desert outposts are integral to the sacral landscape of Uch and its relationship to the political landscape of medieval India.

Organization of the Book

I began to organize this book with the frame within which the study of Muslim pasts in India is undertaken—a frame that explores first the question of spatial otherness and then political, linguistic, and social otherness. This particular framework came into being in the nineteenth century via the colonial British inquiry into understanding Indian past as a history of prior failed Muslim polities. The most well-known and demonstrative figure of this historiography is Henry Myers Elliot, whose *The History of India as Told by Its Own Historians* collapsed the history of Islam and the history of Muslim polities within the same frame. Elliot relied on translated excerpts from *Chachnama* as key evidence for the violence and depravity in the very origins of Muslim political history in India.

I approach the construction of this narrative by arguing that the text at the heart of *Chachnama* is misread, mischaracterized, and misplaced. It is misread as a translation of an earlier Arabic text; in fact it is an original Persian text from the early thirteenth century. It is mischaracterized as a conquest narrative; in reality it is a work of political theory. It is misplaced as a source of Muslim origins; indeed it represents a politically heterogeneous world of thirteenth-century Sind.

I aim to give a genealogical reading of *Chachnama* that provides a "history of morals, ideals and metaphysical concepts . . . as they stand for emergence of different interpretations . . . as events on the stage of historical process."[40] The book then reads the entirety of *Chachnama* to reconstruct its historical identity and to locate how it made "contributions to particular discourses, and thereby recognize the ways in which [it] followed or challenged or subverted the conventional terms of those discourses themselves."[41] My book begins by situating the political and social history of the region of Sind in the Indian Ocean ecumene. It then situates *Chachnama* in a thirteenth-century political and social world. The next three chapters constitute a close reading of the text in relation to particular historiographic traditions. In the last chapter, I trace of the afterlife of *Chachnama* and demonstrate how it becomes the origins narrative for Islam's arrival in India.

In Chapter 1, "Frontier with the House of Gold," I present the political and social history of translocal networks stretching across the Indian Ocean. I trace a connected history for India and Arabia before the eighth century, a history of Muslim campaigns in India from the earliest Arabic sources, and a political history of Muslim polities in Sind from the eighth to the eighteenth centuries.

In Chapter 2, "A Foundation for History," I demonstrate that *Chachnama* is not a translated history from Arabic into Persian. Rather it is a work created in thirteenth-century Uch and reflects the political and social concerns of Qabacha's court in Sind. I do so by situating *Chachnama* in Persian historiography and textual productions of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. I then show that *Chachnama* does not fit the genre of conquest narrative, by examining it against the earliest Arabic conquest texts. Finally, I demonstrate the presence of a diverse and intertwined political and cultural space in medieval Sind by reading the Arabic and Persian archives from the ninth to the thirteenth centuries.

In Chapter 3, "My Son, What Is the Matter with You?" I argue that advice—dialogic, didactic, and demonstrative—is the mode for presenting a theory of politics in *Chachnama*. Letters are the primary template for the models of advice in the text. They provide the clearest articulation of *Chachnama's* theory of politics. I argue that *Chachnama* is a fully Indic text influenced by texts and genres from Persian as well as Sanskrit, reflecting the intertwined world of thirteenth-century Sind.

In Chapter 4, "A Demon with Ruby Eyes," I turn explicitly to the question of difference in *Chachnama's* theory of the political. This chapter explores the political theory of understanding difference as presented in *Chachnama* to consider the question of religious difference, cohabitation, and political organization in the thirteenth century. I show that *Chachnama* focuses on the recognition of diverse sacrality, the quest for accommodation of different communities, and the role of politics in governing difference.

Chapter 5, "The Half Smile," presents the broader social world of *Chachnama*, which included powerful women in key political roles such as queens and advisors. It shows how *Chachnama* utilizes narratives of politically powerful women to articulate a theory of ethical subjecthood by focusing on their political will, desire, intuition, and critical acuity for political risks.

In Chapter 6, "A Conquest of Pasts," I show how the European translation project in the eighteenth century created the fundamental question of origins for Islam in India and then posited *Chachnama* as the key text. Hence, I look at the *longue durée* interest in *Chachnama* from the fourteenth century to the present. I begin with the history of the text through medieval and early modern periods. The transition for *Chachnama* as a history of conquest occurs after the English translation of Alexander Dow (1735–1779). I trace *Chachnama* in the works of British colonial historians, Indian nationalist historians, scholars of Islam, and Indian Marxist historians.

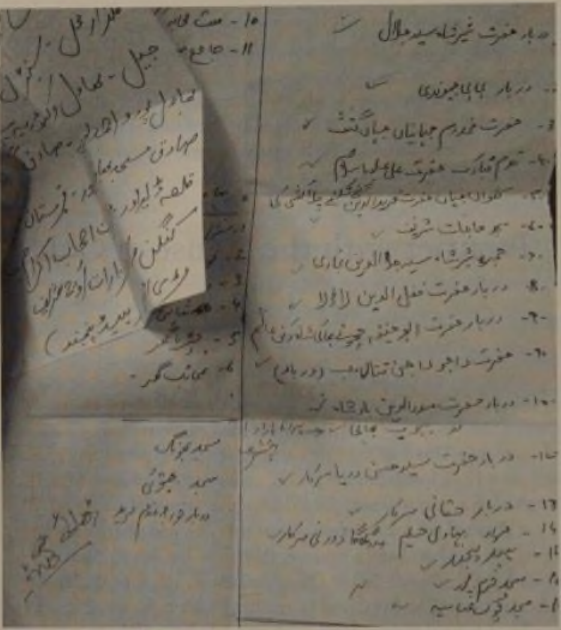
Origins are a seductive necessity for historians. We pay little heed to Marc Bloch's admonishment in 1941 that “an origin is a beginning which explains. Worse still, a beginning which is a complete explanation. There lies the ambiguity, and there the danger!”[42] This book against origins is a contextual reading of a medieval text that foregrounds the burden of unreading the afterlife of that text.

1

Frontier with the House of Gold

IN MARCH 2011, I went to Uch—a dusty, small town in southern Punjab from which the river Indus changed its course many hundreds of years ago. This was my third visit to the town; previously in 2004 and 2006 I had worked in the private collections of two local families, examining a manuscript of the *Chachnama*. Each morning, I asked for a list of sacral sites that I should visit that day, and each morning my hosts, the Bukhari family, gave me a different list. My explorations included the shrines of Safi al Din Gourzani (d. 1007), Jalaluddin Jahanian Jahangasht (d. 1383), and Jalaluddin Surkh Bukhari (d. 1291); the tombs of Baha'al-Halim (built 1378) and Bibi Javindi (built 1493); and the mosque associated with Muhammad bin Qasim. Along with lists came instructions to pay special attention to the trees—the one that was planted by Muhammad bin Qasim and under which a series of eminent Sufis had meditated; the one behind the tomb of Bibi Javindi to which childless women could pray for a boon; the one which covered the graves that lined the way to the shrine of Surkh Bukhari and whose shade would help rid a person of sins.

It was suggested that I follow the contours of the wall that runs along Uch Bukhari and Uch Gilani, dissecting the bazaar and the medieval city. At Jahanian Jahangasht's tomb, I was told to visit the wall on which he had sat and traveled to different parts of the world, including Egypt, Mecca, and Medina.[1] From his travels, Jahaniyan Jahan Gasht (the



List of sacral sites of Uch Sharif. (Photo © Manan Ahmed Asif.)

honorific Jahangasht is "one who goes around the world"), brought back sacral objects—the handprint of ʿAli, the footprint of the Prophet—that are embedded in various locations in Uch. These were the sort of details to which my hosts directed my attention. I gathered these lists, along with hand-drawn maps of Uch, tracing out the pathways connecting the sites. I spent my days threading through the graves, the mounds, and the shrines. At return each night, I would tick off the sites I had visited.

The stories surrounding these sacral objects suggest an interconnected social world that stretched from this dusty town to metropolises in Syria, Iraq, and Iran through nodes in the Indian Ocean and the Red Sea. The personages who are now buried in Uch had themselves hailed from parts of Arabia, Iran, and Central Asia. These Sufi saints left further legacies in India, as their sons, grandsons, and spiritual heirs moved from Uch to Gujarat, to the Deccan, and to Bengal.

Even the briefest sketch of trade relations and maritime contact between India and Arabia should bring into stark relief the assumptions that undergird histories of Muslim origins in India—that the communities of India first encountered Arabs only as conquerors in the eighth century. As one approaches the age of Islam in Arabia, the issues of trade, navigation, knowledge, and access to the Indian Ocean arc become intimately tied to our understandings of the society and worldview into which Muhammad was born and where he declared the first Muslim state. The encounter of that state with the geography of western India was twofold: it was a continuation of the Indian Ocean trade and migration network as well as a response to the political aftermath of the dissolution of the Sassanid Empire.

The presence of Arab communities in Sind and Gujarat far predates the beginning of Muslim polities in Arabia. The Muslim polities in Sind that emerged in the eighth century undoubtedly helped the growth of trade and settlement networks between Arabia and India. Settlements in Aden, Muscat, Diu, and Thana predate the Arabian Muslim empires of Damascus and Baghdad. There are numerous mentions of Arab families who settled in these regions in political exile or as traders. These regions offer connected histories—the proof of their interactions lies in the gift registries of various Arab courts, in translations of texts, in the settlements of communities, and in built architecture.

One response to the origins narrative of conquest in historiography is to separate the "peaceful" presence of Muslims in India from the "conquest" presence. Not only does such an approach pose the problem of apologia, there are no analytical reasons to offer such a separation. The two are intricately intertwined. Instead of narratives of *arrivals*, we need a consistent history of *being* Muslim in India. The origins narrative forecloses any reading of the Muslim past in India as being interconnected or socially and culturally heterogeneous. Rather, it presents a particular idea of "conquest"—one centered on Muslim violence against Hindu rulers and subjects, prejudicial taxation, and temple destruction.

This chapter reopens that history to see how historical records from a variety of sources present political and mercantile interactions between Arabia and India. The formation of an Indian Ocean milieu and the following discussion of Greek accounts of India in general and Alexander the Great's campaigns in particular are necessary for they constitute the textual milieu for *Chachnama*'s world: *Chachnama* makes explicit references to Alexander and styles itself as conquest literature. Hence, in order to reread *Chachnama*, I must present the ways in which pre-Muslim conceptions of Sind are present in the text as well as take stock of the historiography of conquest prior to the text, including the very genre of conquest literature. A most critical example of pertinent conquest literature is the mid-ninth-century account provided by the historian Baladhuri in his book *Futuh al-Buldan*.

With that in mind, I turn first to the outermost frame of the Indian Ocean and the Greek accounts of India that are quoted in *Chachnama*. Next, I map the terms "Hind" and "Sind" in Arab historiography, and I provide a political history that is articulated in those accounts. My aim is not to recover earliest accounts of Muslim campaigns but to demonstrate the inherently connected ways in which those sources presented the world of medieval Sind.

Sind as an Indian Ocean Region

Geographer Martin Lewis once cautioned that "geographical terminology before the nineteenth century was anything but precise. Labels for large expanses of water or land were often deployed in a casual manner, imperfect synonyms abounded, and the transposition of place-names was common."[2] Early textual references to the Indian Ocean are the perfect illustration of Lewis's warning, not only in terms of labeling but also in definition. Consider that the Indian Ocean arc, geographically speaking, can extend from the Red Sea to the South China Sea, Africa to Australia. It encompasses the East African coastlines from Somalia down to Mozambique, the southern Arabian coasts of Yemen, Oman, and the Persian Gulf, the Arabian Sea and the western coasts of India, the Bay of Bengal, and around to the South China Sea. Even as it connects all of these economies and societies, its "oceanness," until recently, was highly debatable. Like the Mediterranean, the Indian Ocean is situated at the center of numerous East-West and North-South connections throughout the history of various civilizations. It is precisely because of this rich history of contacts across millennia that the term "Indian Ocean" obfuscates more than it reveals; it is imprecise in its usage and uncertain in its range of usage across time.

The Indian Ocean arc, thus, needs further delineation. One can single out some of the various seas that constitute the arc: the Red Sea, the Arabian Sea, the Persian Gulf, the Bay of Bengal, and the South China Sea. There are at least four distinct networks of maritime contact and movement between coastal cities and communities: between the Gulf and East Africa (Hadramawt to Somalia); the Gulf and the western shores of India (Muscat to Daybul or Surat or Calicut); the eastern coast of Bengal and the Andaman and Malay islands; the southern China shore and Southeast Asian archipelago. These networks varied a great deal over time in terms of activity and exposure. They were augmented by smaller maritime trade networks and supplemented by land routes such as the Red Sea routes up the Arabian peninsula or the Yemen, Sind, and Gujarat routes. Discussions of the "Indian Ocean network" in the ancient or the medieval era, the early modern era or, even the modern eras are really discussions of particular nodes on particular networks, all with their own contingent histories. For example, the two dominant foci of examination in existing scholarship are the Harrapan and Mesopotamian trade connection and the ancient Rome-to-India trade route. Both of these would constitute one arterial network among the many Indian Ocean nodes.[3]

Nile Green has argued for carving up another monolithic category, "Middle East," into a subcategory, "Indian Ocean Arena," by "placing the Arabian Peninsula, the Gulf, and parts of Iraq into an Indian Ocean arena that positions these regions into contact with the Horn of Africa, East Africa, India, and even Southeast Asia."[4] This is a sensible argument that also allows us to address temporal discontinuities in our archival materials. There is no doubt that the complexity of source material (from linguistic variation to major lacuna in scholarly coverage), the diversity of nodes, and the resultant fissures in historiography make it impossible to paint a comprehensive picture of the "Indian Ocean–Middle East arena" that makes sense from the fifth millennium BCE to the modern era. The archaeological (as well as numismatic and epigraphic) evidence for premedieval periods is sketchy due both to the vastness of terrains that need coverage and to the political realities that have made inquisitive activities such as digs quixotic, to say the least. Our textual evidence is no better. The sources are limited and scattered, and scholars are prone to specializing in particular genres of texts to the detriment of a comprehensive picture. As a result, there are clusters of archaeological and epigraphic data that sometimes dovetail with anachronistic textual data but often do not, since scholars are working with many silences. Still, taking up Green's suggestion, an Indian Ocean–Middle East arena is precisely the arc of activity and movement that constitute Sind as an Indian Ocean region, linking Indus-valley coastal towns down to the Gujarat region as well as across the Arabian Gulf to Muscat and Aden.

Such an understanding of this region has deep roots in antiquity. Archaeological evidence for seafaring and exchange networks in the Red Sea and Arabian Gulf begins as early as the fourth millennium BCE. That network of trading vessels, relying on monsoon winds, sea currents, and navigable straits, moved in nodes between the Harappan and the Mesopotamian cities.[5] Those earliest contacts involved exchanges of ore, grains, and ceremonial artifacts.[6] Into the Hellenistic period, a substantial trade "crossed the waters between Roman Egypt, the eastern coast of Africa, the western and southern coasts of Arabia, and the western coast of India."[7] This sea trade supplemented the land routes via Petra to Palmyra in Syria, and it consisted mainly of "the acquisition of elephants used by the Egyptian military and of gold to facilitate Ptolemaic payment of mercenary troops and other related military expenditures."[8] On their return, the ships carried oil and wine, glassware, drinking vessels, tools, precious stones, and copper.[9] Roughly stated, this pattern of merchandise originating in China, the Maldives, East Africa, or Southern India and traveling via sea and land routes to markets in Greater Syria, Egypt, and the Mediterranean world persisted throughout the classical period.[10]

The majority of classical Greek accounts of maritime activity throughout the Red Sea, Arabia, and the coastal cities of India survive in later histories and geographies such as those by Strabo (ca. 64 BCE to 21 CE), Pliny the Elder (ca. 77 CE), and Claudius Ptolemy (ca. 146–170 CE). The most notable source on the trade between Rome and India from the first century is the *Periplus Maris Erythraei*, a document written by an unknown sailor between 40 and 70 CE that survives in a single manuscript from the early tenth century.[11] In these accounts, there are some explicit mentions of ports on the Indus River. These early sources seem to suggest that the trade encompassed only luxury items—gold, pearls, gemstones, silk, etc. However, recent research shows that the earliest trade between Rome and India had a much heavier emphasis on staple and bulk goods: salt, sugar, pepper, ordinary cloth, coir, timber, copper, and iron.[12]

I should note that the conceptions of "India" in these Greek or Roman sources had affected later Arab historiography by constructing fantastic visions of the wonders of India.[13] It is largely the region of Sind (tagged as India) which emerged as a land of marvels from these earliest Greek sources. These sources in turn influenced the bulk of future accounts. The fifth-century BCE treatise on India by Ctesias of Cnidus and the fourth-century BCE *Indica* by Megasthenes both fall into this category. Ctesias was reported to have been a physician with the court of Artaxerxes Mnemon of Persia, while Megasthenes reportedly traveled to India with Alexander the Great. These texts, compiled from later accounts, provide geographical details peppered with fabulous reports of a land populated with animals of great size (ants, scorpions, and crabs), of people without heads and with eyes on their shoulders, of men who have faces like dogs, and of other men who have no nostrils and a single eye in the forehead.[14] Megasthenes's marvels of India were reproduced and augmented in Pliny's *Historia Naturalis*, finished in 77 CE, and in Solinus's *Collectanea Rerum Memorabilium*, written in the third century. India, in these accounts, retained its preeminence as a land of great wealth and wonder. These collections of extraordinary and marvelous stories defined India as frontier at the edge of the known world, overflowing with riches and the supernatural.[15]

The decline of the Roman presence in the Red Sea and beyond coincided with, or more likely was a result of, the rise of the Sassanian and Chinese merchants and the development of multinodal trade in the Indian Ocean world: Madagascar and Indonesia, Somalia and Aden, Quanzhou and Kerala, and above all, Sarandip. The paucity of textual archives regarding trade in these locales during late antiquity remains a problem. Thus, these local networks, with their ebbs and flows, are largely hidden from history. From archaeological evidence as well as a few textual sources, it is clear that the Sassanid Empire (r. 226–651 CE) took over much of the trade flowing in the Persian and Arabian Gulfs from the fourth century onward. Excavations in cities like Siraf, Rishahr, and Jazirat al-Ghanam have revealed substantial evidence of Sassanian port activity and settlement.[16] These port sites acted as trading hubs, with merchants from various nodes trafficking through Sarandip.[17]

The sixth-century work by Cosmas Indicopleustes, *Christian Topography*, contains a chapter on Sarandip in which he describes a world of translocal trade flowing in and out of its ports, all managed primarily by Sassanian merchants. Cosmas states that the island of Sarandip was frequented by ships from Persia, China, Ethiopia, and India. From China, it imported silk, aloes, cloves, and sandalwood, which were taken to places on the Malabar coast: Sind, Himyar, and Adule. From Indian ports came ivory; pepper from Malabar; musk, castor, and spikenard from Sind; and copper, sesame wood, and cloth from Khambat.[18] By the end of the sixth century, the Sassanians controlled the westward flow of this trade by owning the port cities along the Arabian and Persian Gulf as well as the city of Daybul in Sind, which was captured during the reign of Bahram V (421–438). The Byzantine emperors Justin (518–527) and Justinian (527–565) made repeated efforts to break the Sassanian hold over trade at Sarandip, even convincing the Christian Ethiopian kingdom of Axum to invade and occupy Yemen in 524/25. The Sassanians retaliated by subduing Aden in 575 and taking over Bab al-Mandab, the entrance to the Red Sea.[19]

The description of such nodal sea routes, with transactions happening in a number of coastal economies, is borne out by accounts of visits to Buddhist shrines in India and Ceylon by Chinese pilgrims from the fourth, fifth, and sixth centuries.[20] The Han ambassador Zhang Qian, who travelled to *Shen-tu* (Sind) during the second century BCE (138–125 BCE), is the earliest extant account on Kashmir. This does attest to the region but contains no information on trading activity. The two later reports, by the monk Faxian (active ca. 399–417 CE) and the pilgrim Xuanzang (602–664 CE), provide firsthand and detailed reports of cities, ports, and routes in the Sind region. Faxian takes a merchant ship to reach Sarandip and comments that "merchants of different countries resort here to trade."[21] Taken collectively, these reports clearly substantiate the nature of the trade (they mention specific goods produced) as well as the existence of settlements across the western coast and in Sarandip.

In Arab geographic accounts, India is referred to by the compound *al-Hind wa'l Sind* (Hind and Sind).*Sind* typically referred specifically to the Indus River valley and north to Kashmir, while *Hind* referred to Gujarat, Kerala, and beyond. Tracing the land attached to the word *al-Hind* (*Hind*) through pre-Islamic and early Muslim sources is an exercise in conjecture. However, Hind is usually understood in contemporary scholarship to denote "India." André Wink, for example, states in the preface to his three-volume study *al-Hind:*

> "India" or *al-Hind*, throughout the medieval period, was an Arab or Muslim conception. The Arabs, like the Greeks, adopted a pre-existing Persian term, but they were the first to extend its application to the entire Indianized region from Sind and Makran to the Indonesian Archipelago and mainland Southwest Asia. It therefore appears to us as if the Indians or Hindus acquired a collective identity in interaction with Islam.[22]

This assessment from Wink highlights one of the key issues in the discussion of the idea of India—that India (or Hindu or Hinduism) is a construction imposed from the outside.[23] Wink's twin claims—that Arab geographers extended the meaning of Hind to cover the subcontinent and that Hindus acquired a collective identity through their interactions with Muslims—take as a given that *al-Hind* had a clear and concrete meaning to Arab geographers and that it remained unchanged from the sixth to the eleventh century. It fails to consider that Hind and Sind were cognate categories and that Sind was often the geographic entity represented in mercantile sources concerned with Arabian trade. Tracing the arrival of the word *Hind* itself into Arabic is also conjectural.[24] Scholars generally agree that *Hind* (as a geographical construct) most probably entered Arabic via Sassanid usage of *Sindu*. *Sindu* in Sanskrit can refer to any stream, river, or ocean but is often taken to mean as the "local name of Indus."[25] A Babylonian list includes a reference to "muslin—the Indian cloth—called *śadin*."[26] *Šindhu* or *šinṭu*, referring, perhaps, to the the river Indus or to the sea off the coast of Aden, is also found in Assyrian sources.[27]

From the seventh century to the ninth, the activities of merchants and pilgrims continue to shape this region as an Indian Ocean region, with ships from China routinely sailing in the Red Sea, and Arab dhows a common presence in the Malay islands.[28] A typical description of this sea trade, including routes, sites, and communities, survives in the anonymous *Akhbar al-Ṣin wa'l-Hind*, dated in the mid-ninth century:

> As for the places which they reach they relate that most of the Chinese boats are loaded at Sirāf and that the goods are carried to Sirāf from Basra, Oman and other ports. . . . Then from there the boats set sail for al-Hind destined for Kulam Malay, and the journey from Muscat to Kulam Malay (Quilon, Kerala), with moderate winds, is one month.[29]

Sind as an Indian Ocean region was thus long connected with Arabia (and farther afield). It contained settlements, trading connections, and ports that predated the birth of Islam, and these connections continued after the rise of Muslim political power in the region.

The region of Sind, as an adjacent geography, faced military campaigns from the Muslim polity based in Medina, and later those in Damascus and Baghdad. The various military campaigns, expeditions, and settlements must also be properly contextualized to provide a fuller picture of the eighth-century history invoked by *Chachnama*. In invoking this history myself, I am cognizant of the danger of re-creating *Chachnama*'s understanding of Muslim past by simply producing my own temporally bound history of conquest. Hence, when in the following section I turn toward the history of Arab political and military efforts in the region of Sind as reconstructed from mid-ninth century Arabic histories, I do so with the understanding that these texts are in themselves documents asserting political and social power and that they cannot be read at face value as empirical, factual history. I revisit them to detail the historical and historiographic imagination employed within *Chachnama*.

Writing Conquest

To trace this history of Muslim campaigns in Sind, I turn our focus to the *futuh* ("opening," understood as conquest) narratives. This genre emerged in the ninth century out of the the older *sira* texts, which described the life of the Prophet. In *sira* texts, accounts of the Prophet's military campaigns laid the foundation for the development of *futuh*. However, *futuh* had both a historiographical and a political function to play in early Islam, as Fred Donner argues:

> The Umayyads, who from the time of ʿAbd al-Malik (685–705) on seem to have supervised an increasingly clear articulation of the Muslim community as a distinct monotheist confession, began to encourage the recounting and collection of reports about how the conquest had been organized and how they had proceeded. Their purpose was to establish what we might call a narrative weapon to bolster their claims to hegemony over their vast non-Muslim populations, by relating the conquests' apparently miraculous successes.[30]

The *futuh* narratives, which served the purpose of legitimizing political authority or genealogical claims of supremacy and validation, developed into a crucial source on a range of external issues: conversion, taxation, administration, and—most importantly—Muslim encounters with diverse communities. The *futuh* narratives began as testimony from participants in the military campaigns or from secondhand narrators. These were accounts of personal or tribal bravery and valor augmented by information about military appointments and decisions into a narrativized history of the conquest of a specific region. The genre held onto its internal motifs (letters between commanders, instructional lists, etc.) even as it developed the usage of *isnad* (chains of transmission) and a divinely inspired teleology. During their development in the ninth and tenth centuries, the *futuh* narratives also emerged as key informants for the works of geographers, the universal historians, and the compilers of biographical dictionaries. The earliest extant *futuh*—such as the *Ta'rikh Futuh al-Sham* (conquest of Syria) by Azdi Basri (d. 810)—illustrate the regional focus as well as the narrative drive of Islam's preordained eminence.

Based on the citations offered by later historians, the earliest *futuh* that dealt specifically with Hind and Sind were written by Mada'ini (d. 843).[31] Baladhuri (d. 892), Ya'qubi (d. 905), and Tabari (d. 923) were three universal historians of the tenth century who all incorporated Mada'ini's books into their accounts on Hind and cited him as the primary source. Mada'ini is reported to have written his *futuh* from detailed firsthand accounts of the participants in the campaign. He is the only one of the early historians to have dealt directly with the conquest of Sind. The greatest amount of his material (as well as direct quotations) appears in the work of Baladhuri, who is the only one of the three historians to have a section devoted to the conquest of Sind. Since no other historian from the period—notably neither Tabari nor Ya'qubi—offer greater detail on the account provided by Baladhuri, I can conjecture that his text is the chief source on the campaigns in Sind for *Chachnama*, and we can retrace the historiographical roots of *Chachnama*'s account by examining Baladhuri.

Baladhuri's Account of Sind

Baladhuri lived and died in Baghdad during the ninth century. The probable date for his birth is in the 810s. Persian by birth, he came from a scribal family (his grandfather Jabir was also employed as a scribe and a secretary). It is said that he traveled widely in Iraq and Khurasan. He studied directly with Mada'ini. He found work as a translator from Persian into Arabic in the courts of the `Abbasid caliphs Wathik (d. 847) and Mutawakkil (d. 861). He became a close confidant of the latter. He authored two of the greatest surviving works in early Muslim historiography: *Kitab Futuh al-Buldan* (Book of Conquest of Lands) and *Ansab al-Ashraf* (Genealogy of the Nobles). The conquest of Sind is described in his *Kitab Futuh al-Buldan*, which also carries the title of *Kitab al-Buldan al-Kabir* (Book of Great Lands). It begins with Muhammad's migration to Medina and continues to describe battles and conquests during the Prophet's lifetime. After Arabia, Baladhuri has chapters on the conquest of Syria, Iraq, Egypt, Spain, Persia, and at the very end, a short section on the conquest of Sind. Baladhuri begins that section with a direct transmission from Mada'ini as his primary source for the entire section.[32]

Baladhuri's history, produced for the `Abbasid court, is removed from the earliest historical events it narrates by more than two hundred years and is thus itself an act of imagining the past. Yet it is not the facticity or empirical truth of his account that concerns us here. Rather, it is the way in which this historiography is repurposed by

Chachnama. With that in mind, let us turn to his description of the military campaigns of Muslims toward the region of Hind and Sind.

Baladhuri notes that the first campaign toward Hind did not happen until the Muslim armies achieved control of a port. During the caliphate of ʿUmar (r. 634–644), the appointed governor of Bahrain, ʿUthman bin Abi'l Thaqafi dispatched three naval expeditions to port cities in Hind in 636: under the command of Hakam Thaqafi to Thana (near Bombay) and to Broach (in Gujarat); and under Mughira to Daybul (near the delta of the Indus River).[33] Baladhuri does not note the size of the expeditionary force or the intent of the expeditions. Presumably, these were small sorties, attempting to trace trading networks and gain a foothold in the ports. It is also probable that these expeditions were not sanctioned by the caliphate: the governor of Bahrain received a sharp rebuke from ʿUmar when he learned of the expedition: "O Brother of Thaqif, you have put the worm on the wood. I swear, by Allah, that if they had been smitten, I would have taken the equivalent (in men) from your families."[34] Baladhuri notes that this rebuke stopped further sea approaches to Sind while the campaigns to subdue the Sassanian forces in Iran continued eastward through the regions of Khurasan, Kirman, Sistan, and Makran. Given that the late-ninth-century political realities of the ʿAbbasid imperium prevented any military incursions into Sind, this piece of rebuke served the function of giving historical precedent for a policy that may be seen as too engrossed in the ʿAbbasid eastern front.[35]

As Baladhuri narrates it, the Sassanid retreat from Iran lingered for decades, continually driving the Muslim armies into pursuit. It was at this time, Baladhuri recounts, during the reign of caliph ʿUthman bin ʿAffan (r. 644–655), that another naval expedition was sent to the frontier of Sind. Ḥakim bin Jabalah ʿAbdi was dispatched and returned to deliver a report, described by Baladhuri, on the condition of Sind: "'O Commander of the Believers, I examined it [Sind] and know it well.' The caliph said, describe it. He said, 'the water supply is sparse, the dates are inferior, and the robbers are bold. A small army would be lost there, and a large army would starve.'"[36] This was enough to dissuade ʿUthman, states Baladhuri, from sending any further expeditions to Sind, though there were continued efforts to subdue eastern Afghanistan—Sistan was taken in 652.[37] These reports narrated by

Baladhuri highlight the scarcity of resources in Sind and condemn needless expeditions which ended at the frontier—again an indication of ʿAbbasid policies rather than Umayyad history. Baladhuri records that the early Umayyad regime mounted a number of campaigns to subdue rebellious contingents in Sind's neighboring region of Makran, yet with no real benefit. The list of armies and commanders in the seventh century given by Baladhuri illustrated the continual pressure exerted on the eastern Iranian front with a paucity of attention toward Sind.[38] Baladhuri sums up the Umayyad attitude toward Sind in the words of the poet Hamdani, who lamented:

> You are setting off to Makran
> how far is that, from you
> I have no use for Makran
> there lies neither battle nor trade
> they asked me to go
> I refused
> I refuse to even hear its name
> such is that place
> if too many, they die of want
> if too little, of waste.[39]

Baladhuri describes that it was during the reign of ʿAbd al-Malik (685–705) that Umayyad attention shifted to quelling the eastern frontier, which had emerged as a safe haven for Kharajite and ʿAlawi (a proto-Shiʿa group that advocated ʿAli's caliphate before ʿUthman) rebels. In 694, ʿAbdal Malik appointed Hajjaj bin Yusuf Thaqafi to the governorship of Iraq, which administratively included the entire eastern frontier of the Umayyads. Hajjaj launched an effort to take out strongholds against the Muslim military in Makran (largely the Zunbil people and the ʿAlawi rebels) and push farther into the region. However, the first commander he dispatched was almost immediately killed.[40] In 696, Hajjaj sent another commander, Numri, who managed to govern Makran for a few years. Baladhuri narrated an event during his tenure that emerged in later historiography as the *casus belli* of the Muslim conquest of Sind:

> Then Ḥajjaj, after the death of Mujjah, made Muhammad bin Harun Numri the governor. During his reign, the king of *Jazirat Yaqut* (Sri

> Lanka) sent some women, born in his realm as Muslims, to Ḥajjaj. Their fathers were traders and had died there. The intention was to gain the favor of Ḥajjaj. The ship in which they were sailing was captured by the Mid people of Daybul, who sail on *bawarij* (pirate ships). One of the women from Bani Yarbu cried *Ya Ḥajjaj!* (Oh Ḥajjaj!) and when he heard of this, he said *Ya Labaik* (I come). He sent a letter to Dahar for the release of the women. He replied: "They were captured by pirates, whom I do not control." Ḥajjaj sent ʿUbaidullah bin Nabhan to Daybul, but he was killed. Then he wrote to Budail bin Tahfah, who was in Oman, and told him to go against Daybul. But when he faced the enemy, his horse bucked and he was killed by the enemies. Some say he was killed by the Jat people of the Buddhists.[41]

It is important to note here that Baladhuri places this account more than a decade before the campaign of Muhammad bin Qasim and during an already forty-year-old effort to placate the frontier of Makran. Yet this account of the "abduction of Muslim women" dramatically reverberates in historiography and popular imagination to this day. It is an incredibly potent account: a helpless Muslim woman and her cry for help galvanizing a distant empire into a rescue mission. To the novelists, dramatists, and political commentators, it provides endless permutations of history's silenced voices and the glory of Islam's heroic past. Even scholars have rather uncritically embraced this episode as the rationale for invasion. Writes Wink, "During Ḥajjāj's governorship it was the 'Mīds of Debal' who kidnapped Muslim women who were traveling from Sri Lanka to Arabia, providing the occasion for the Arabs to declare the holy war on Sind and Hind."[42] Yet we cannot take at face value the historiographic significance attached to this account. In chapter 6, I will return to this account and show how it emerged in historiography. It is enough at the moment to recognize that Baladhuri placed it about a decade before the expedition of Muhammad bin Qasim.

Judging from Baladhuri's reconstruction of late-seventh-century and early-eighth-century Muslim campaigns in Sind, we can conclude that the Umayyad State was interested in the region for several reasons: to secure a frontier region against rebels, to address the financial affairs of the Marwanid branch of the Umayyad, and to consolidate mercantile routes.

The Expedition of 712

Now I want to turn to Baladhuri's account of Muhammad bin Qasim to construct the political history that *Chachnama* drew upon for its narration. The episode of the captured Muslim women is the totemic origins narrative framing Muslim arrival in India. As already seen in the historical record, the presence of Arabs and Muslims in India predates this particular episode, which itself predates the expedition of Muhammad bin Qasim in 712. To write against the origins narrative, one needs to grasp the political history of Qasim's campaign from the earliest historical sources. In this section, I present the account of Muhammad bin Qasim and the expedition of 712 provided by Baladhuri.

The commander of the 712 campaign dispatched to Sind by Hajjaj is Muhammad bin Qasim bin Muhammad bin Hakam bin Abu 'Ukail. Qasim was born in Ta'if, near Mecca. We do not know the year of his birth, but Baladhuri quotes a poet who remarks that he was seventeen when he conquered Sind, which would put his birth year around 694 CE. He belonged to the powerful and influential Thakif family and was the nephew of Hajjaj, the most powerful man in the Umayyad empire at that time. As such, it was at an early age—fifteen or sixteen—that Hajjaj asked him to lead expeditions in Iran.

Baladhuri narrates that Qasim was campaigning in Iran, near Shiraz, in 710 when he was asked to proceed to Sind with six thousand troops and auxiliary personnel. Another force was dispatched from Oman to bring him supplies (including thread and needles). Hajjaj took great care to manage the expedition. He even worried about the plight of dysentery for the armies: he "gathered cotton and soaked it in aged vinegar and dried it in the shade." He said, "when you reach Sind, vinegar is very scarce. Drench this cotton in water. Boil the water and season with it."[43]

Baladhuri narrates Muhammad bin Qasim's successful capturing of a series of forts, establishing governors there, and moving toward the capital city of Raja Dahar:

> Then Muhammad bin Qasim left Arma'il and with Juhm bin Zuhr Ju'fi arrived at Daybul on a Friday. There he received ships with men and weapons and supplies. After getting to Daybul, he constructed

> trenches around the troops and set up lances around the trenches with flags affixed to them. The armies were stationed under their flags. He installed a catapult known as ʿArus, which took 500 men to pull. In Daybul was a great temple (*budd*) with a tall mast, and on that mast was a red flag, which covered the city when it blew in the wind. And they report that the temple had a great minaret built in the midst of the city, which housed their idols (*sanam*). The temple was known by the name of the idols. . . . Every third day, Hajjaj's letters reached Muhammad, and Muhammad's letters with news of what he saw in front of him and his thoughts, reached Hajjaj. In a letter, Hajjaj ordered Muhammad, "Install the catapult ʿArus. Shorten the east-facing support. Call the operators of *Arus* and ask them to aim for the mast which you described to me." The mast was aimed at and broken, and great distress spread through the Unbelievers. They left the fort to attack Muhammad, and he drove them back. He ordered ladders, and men climbed them to the fort wall—the first being a man from the Murad of the people of Kufa. The fight lasted for three days, as Muhammad killed many soldiers there. The governor of Dahar fled, and the custodian (*saadni*) of their house of gods was killed. After the capture of the city, Muhammad measured the quarters for Muslims and built a mosque and settled four thousand men.[44]

From Baladhuri's account, *Chachnama* and later Persian histories of Qasim's expedition take up a number of themes: the exchange of letters, the presence of a temple, and the settlement of Muslims. After the capture of the port city of Daybul, Qasim proceeded to Nirun, "whose inhabitants sent to Hajjaj [via Qasim] their priests' plea for peace. They gave Muhammad supplies and brought him into the city and confirmed the treaty."[45] Similarly, when Qasim "reached this side of the Mehran River [Indus], where monks from the Sarbiadas temple came to him and offered peace. He assigned a governor and imposed a tax (*kharaj*) on them."[46] The role of priestly mediators in the success of Qasim's campaign is noted repeatedly by Baladhuri. Baladhuri also emphasizes the negotiated settlements between the Muslim army and the population: "The inhabitants asked for peace and a treaty, and the priests worked as envoys to mediate between him and them. He gave them peace and imposed taxes on them, and as insurance he took some notables from them and returned to Muhammad with four thousand of the Jat (*Zutt*) people. He appointed a governor over Sadusa."[47]

On the authority of Mada'ini, who was borrowing a war verse composed by a warrior from Banu Kilab, Baladhuri reports that Qasim defeated Dahar in battle. There is little reason for us to consider the facticity of these verses, though we can note the continued glory of past martial contests in 'Abbasid courtly accounts:

> The horses and spears are witnesses
> And so is Muhammad bin Qasim bin Muhammad
> That I scattered their rows without fear
> Until I came to their great king with my sword
> and left him rolled in the dirt
> without pillow for his cheek.[48]

After the death of Dahar, Baladhuri continues, Qasim's army proceeds along the river to Multan, making alliances along the way with a number of communities:

> Muhammad continued to Aror and Baghrur when the people of Sawandari asked him for peace. He gave them peace on the condition that they feed the Muslims and give them guides. The people of Sawandari are Muslims today. Then he proceeded toward Samad and made a treaty with them like the one with Sawandari. Finally, Muhammad reached Aror. It is one of the cities of Sind and is on a mountain. He besieged the city and conquered it by treaty with the condition that he would neither kill them nor enter their temple. He said, "The *budd* are like the churches of the Christians and the Jews and the fire houses of the Magians." And he imposed tax (*kharaj*) on them and in Aror he built a mosque.[49]

This description of Muslim armies making treaties and controlling non-Muslim communities is critically important for the development of ninth- and tenth-century Muslim polities in Sind. The campaign reaches the outskirts of Multan, which surrenders after a fierce resistance. Baladhuri recounts that Qasim

> gathered great amounts of gold. This was collected in a building which was 10 cubits by 8. At its roof, there was an opening into which all was deposited. From this Multan was known as "Frontier with the House of Gold" (*Farj Bait Dhahab*). *Farj* is *thughur* (frontier). The temple of Multan was a great temple. Great gifts were brought for it, offerings were given, and the people of Sind made pilgrimage here.

> They circumambulated it and shaved their heads and beards. They claim that the idol (*sanam*) inside is in the likeness of the prophet Job, may Allah bless him.[50]

The description of a populous and lively sacral traffic to Multan is significant, as are the clear equivalences drawn by Baladhuri: the pilgrimage is explained with a ritual akin to the Muslim ritual of Hajj (circumambulation). The notice that the idol bears the face of the prophet Job makes another theological commingling. These small textual markers of translation across sacral regimes are important to note, for they will be greatly enhanced in the thirteenth-century account in *Chachnama*.

Baladhuri narrates the death of Muhammad bin Qasim after the fall of Multan and after the change in the Umayyad regime in Damascus. As the campaign is proceeding, the caliph in Damascus, Walid bin ʿAbdal Malik dies, and his successor, Sulaiman bin ʿAbd al-Malik, holds no quarter for Hajjaj and his family. So he orders that Qasim be arrested, put in chains, and brought back to Syria, where he is imprisoned and killed. Baladhuri quotes Qasim's lament and eulogizes him as a great Muslim commander:

> Muhammad recited this verse: "They wasted me, and a precious thing they wasted/On the day of struggle and defense of the frontier." The people of Hind cried at his arrest and erected an idol of him in Kiraj. Salih imprisoned him at Wasit, and Muhammad said, "Though I am imprisoned in Wasit and its land/in irons, twisted/I fought many youths of Persia/And many a brave I slaughtered." And he said, "If I had decided to stay/Many a horse was prepared for battles/and mares. And the horsemen of Saksak would not have entered our land/And no Aki would rule over me/And I would not under an ordinary slave/Curse you, O Time, who destroys the world of the nobility" Along with the members of the family of Abu ʿAkil, Salih tortured and killed Muhammad. Hajjaj had killed Salih's brother, Adam, who shared the opinions of the Kharajites. Hamza bin Baiz Hanafi said, "Gratitude, forgiveness, and generosity/Were in Muhammad bin Qasim bin Muhammad/Commanding armies at the age of seventeen/How close was his command to his birth." And he further said, "He commanded at the age of seventeen/ When his contemporaries were busy playing."[51]

This concludes Baladhuri's section on Qasim's campaign in Sind. His narrative continues to explain that almost immediately after Qasim's dismissal, the Muslim armies lost much of the territory over the southern areas, governing only land south and west of Multan. Another Umayyad rebel, Yazid bin Muhallab, seized Sind and was able to hold it until 723. Hisham bin `Abdal Malik dispatched another commander, Junayd bin Abdar Rahman Murri, to Sind in 723. Junayd embarked on a significant reconquest of the region, expanding into Gujarat and Rajasthan. In 731, the Umayyad founded a city, Mahfuza, as the Muslim base of operations. Baladhuri states that the city was named Mahfuza (Sanctuary), because "by this time all inhabitants of Hind had reverted back to unbelief from Islam, and there were no cities safe for Muslims." Near the end of his account, Baladhuri writes that the region is torn between two Arab groups—the Hijazi and the Qahtani—who are further divided by sectarian differences. He concludes that the Arab campaigns were followed by shaky political rule: "Governors were dispatched to Sind. They fought the enemies, collected the little tribute available, and suppressed the people who rebelled."[52]

Five significant points from Baladhuri's account of the Muslim campaigns in Sind bear highlighting. The first is the prominence given to the Umayyad governor Hajjaj. Baladhuri, as an `Abbasid court scribe could be attempting to critically highlight the policies of the earlier Umayyad regime. Second, we must consider the full import of the reasons behind Muhammad bin Qasim's campaign in Sind. It is clear from Baladhuri that the nascent empire had an acute need to subdue a frontier territory that provided safe harbor to Umayyad enemies and rebels. Baladhuri's account is peppered with many names of `Alawis and Kharajites, evidencing their numbers. Alongside the political concern for subjugation of rebels, there are rare explicit references to the cost of Muslim campaigns in Sind. Baladhuri notes that Hajjaj spent 60 million dirham on the campaign and recouped 120 million dirham from the spoils of war. These almost totemic figures indicate the Umayyad state's monetary crisis. The strained Umayyad military expenditures during the reign of `Abdal Malik, as detailed by Blankinship, confirms such a reading.[53]

The third point concerns Muslim encounters with polytheists. Baladhuri is one of the earliest extant sources for our understanding of the placement of other faiths in Islam's conception of the world. He uses the term *budd* to denote the local religious structure in Sind, but this term should be read more broadly as polytheism. It is an Arabization of the Persian *but*, which can refer to both image as well as temple. Baladhuri clearly states, "Everything they worship is the *budd*. The *sanam* (image) is also *budd*." The other term that appears in Baladhuri is *samani* (from the Sanskrit *sramana*), which specifically refers to Buddhists in other early Arabic accounts. Baladhuri thus confirms the presence of Buddhists in Sind.[54] Regarding this mixture of polytheists, Baladhuri's account shows none of Islam's reputed anxieties about idols and idolaters. Baladhuri uses the word *mushrikun* (those who take other gods) as a descriptor but without any extra gloss. Remarkably, perhaps only for us, he repeatedly mentions but does not comment on idols or statues of the Muslim campaigners, including one of Muhammad bin Qasim and one of the man who killed Dahar.

The fourth point concerns the legal treatment of non-Muslim communities in Sind. Baladhuri reports Muhammad bin Qasim to have declared that "The *budd* are like the churches of the Christians and the Jews and the fire-houses of the Magians."[55] What this comment reveals, at the very least for Baladhuri's text, is that the Muslim armies recognized the sanctity of local sacred spaces. However, the exact legal status of the local population remains unclear in Baladhuri's account. Muhammad bin Qasim imposes a tax (*kharaj*) on regions he takes by treaty. From the context, this appears to be a tax based on land holdings. Still, there is no mention of any punitive taxation for non-Muslims or any other discriminatory legal regime for the local non-Muslim populations. As we move into our examination of the thirteenth-century account of the conquest of Sind, it will be fruitful to keep in mind this report from the earliest Arabic sources. Further, in the narrative of Muhammad bin Qasim's campaign, Baladhuri does not report any cases of temple desecration.[56]

The final point concerns the small overlap between Baladhuri and sources from Sind. The later Muslim campaigns described by Baladhuri are confirmed in a fleeting epigraphic reference in Gujarat inscriptions from 736–739 CE. They refer to Muslims as *Tajika*—a generalized opponent of either central Asian or Arab descent—alongside two other terms *Turuska* and *Parasika*.[57] The most detailed account emerges from the city of Navasarika in southern Gujarat, where the Calukya prince Pulakesiraja defeated the Muslim armies. A copper plate grant records the Calukya king Vallabha bestowing great titles on Pulakesiraja for this feat.[58]

Sind until the Thirteenth Century

As Baladhuri's narrative progresses through the Umayyad regimes and into the ʿAbbasid era, disruption and distress are central themes: commanders or governors are killed, cities are founded and abandoned, treaties end in bloodshed. The frontier of Sind retains a markedly chaotic flavor in these accounts, especially when Baladhuri discusses the Arab governors who refuse to submit to Damascus or Baghdad. The names of Kharajites and ʿAyyar who populate Baladhuri's narratives indicate the real contestations over political power and revenue on the Indic frontier between these groups and the ʿAbbasid regime. Baladhuri notes that by the time of the caliph Mu'tasim (r. 813–833), the ʿAbbasid state had sent a long list of governors to Sind. It also had a large influx of hadith scholars and jurists who made their way to the port cities in Sind. And though pottery and coins gathered from Samarra, Fustat, Daybul, and Mansura show that a cross-regional trade existed, the political climate between Baghdad and Sind remained contentious.[59]

Baladhuri notes that the earliest city state was established during the time of Ma'mun (809–813), when Fazal bin Mahan captured the Gujarat port city of Sindan (near Bombay) and sent an elephant as a gift to the caliph in Baghdad.[60] Baladhuri reports on only two generations of the Mahaniya who ruled the city and carried out expeditions against the coastal pirate colonies. The second polity to emerge was the Habari polity at the city of Mansura. After the death of Mutawakkil in 847, ʿAmr bin Abdulaziz Habari declared himself ruler of Mansura and pledged allegiance to the new ʿAbbasid caliph.[61] He collected taxes and organized the flow of trade through the channels of the Indus. The third and final main principality emerged in the city of Multan around 892.

In 915, when the geographer Mas'udi traveled to Mansura and Multan, he noted that both cities were governed by descendants of ʿAli bin Abu Talib, who were denominationally Shi'a, but that the Friday sermon in both cities was read in the name of the ʿAbbasid caliph.[62] These cities had very limited influence outside of their fortifications. The city states were in constant negotiations with other regional principalities, as their revenues depended on travelers and pilgrims. The little we know of these cities in the ninth and tenth centuries indicates that they did not have many expansionist ambitions. Also of note is that these were the only cities in the region that included some ethnically Arab populations—until the eleventh century—due largely to consistent migration and settlement traffic from the coasts of Yemen and Arabia.

In the late ninth century, a new Muslim state was established by two brothers: Ya'qub and ʿAmr bin Layth Saffari. They threatened Baghdad itself in the 870s and were given a grant by the ʿAbbasid caliphs over Sind. The Saffarids took over cities like Ghazna, Qusdar, Kikan, Qandabil, and Multan, and they held them until 900.[63] They were dethroned by the Samanid, rivals of the Saffarid from Khurasan, who poured into Makran and took Multan during the second decade of the tenth century. By this juncture, the fracturing of the ʿAbbasid polity at Baghdad had eroded even the nominal connection between the frontier of Sind and the capital of Baghdad.

The Isma'ili *da'wa* (summons, invitation to convert) spread in Sind from the Yemeni port cities during early tenth century and was followed by the emergence of Isma'ili centers and closer relations with the Fatimid caliphate in Egypt (r. 909–1171). By 965, the city of Multan was a center of Isma'ili missionary activities across the region.[64] The caliphate in Baghdad was now only a distant observer of the fringes of their eastern realm.

The history of Baladhuri and the later geographers demonstrate that in the early centuries of the second millennium, Sind was a connected space of multiple small polities and courts with markedly diverse populations. This Arabic historiography of Muslim campaigns in the region of Sind further affirms the reading of Sind as an Indian Ocean region interconnected with Arabia and Iran from the seventh century onward. The presence of various mercantile and political communities throughout the eighth and ninth centuries gives prima facie lie to an originary encounter which posits conquest as the first contact. Yet the Arab texts do detail a history of a political frontier where the Muslim campaigns were directed to gain influence and quell challenges to ʿAbbasid stability in the metropole.

The world of the thirteenth-century region of Sind is the focus of the next chapter, which asks, Why was the *Chachnama* written in its particular language and genre? To which political world was Chachnama responding?

2

A Foundation for History

I WAS IN A CAR, driving into Uch from the neighboring town of Ahmedpur Shirkia with S. A. Bukhari, who owns a small jewelry shop and was my considerate host. As we exited the motorway and began to drive through the farmland, I looked at the palm trees which flanked the road. Turning to him, I said, "Palm trees! Why are they so far inland? The coast is a good eight hours' drive away."

"Well, they were planted here in Uch by Muhammad bin Qasim," replied Bukhari.

"And how do we know this?" I asked.

I was quite accustomed to hearing stories of Muhammad bin Qasim told with pride (or with dismay in rural Sind and Punjab), but this time I was surprised by an answer that explicitly mentioned a text. Bukhari explained, "It is written in *Chachnama*. I assumed you would know, since you are the historian."

There were other trees and clusters of trees which are said to be planted by Qasim. He built a mosque in the town. His memory and the material remains of the past Muslim nobility are scattered throughout this landscape. The text of *Chachnama* is linked to the natural and built environment of Uch. Such linkages prompt us to think differently about the origins narrative of Islam in India because that narrative focuses on hegemonic categories and undifferentiated space. In Chapter 1, I presented a spatial and political background that campaigns were directed to gain influence and quell challenges to ʿAbbasid stability in the metropole.

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Dismantling the origins narrative requires such a critical reading of Ali Kufi's *Chachnama* that places it within its textual universe. It puts the text into conversation with the particular political regimes at the time of its production. That is, it places Kufi's *Chachnama* in the world of the early thirteenth century, as described in Muhammad 'Awfi's *Lubabul albab* (completed in 1221) and *Jawami Hikayat wa Lawami ul-Rivayat* (completed in 1231), with Minhaj Suraj Juzjani's *Tabaqat-i Nasiri* (completed ca. 1260). 'Awfi, Kufi, and Juzjani were all in Uch in the early thirteenth century, and they were associated with the court of Nasiruddin Qabacha (r. 1205–1228). In linking *Chachnama* with other texts of the early thirteenth century, I expand also the analysis of how space (the interconnected regions of Sind and Gujarat) influences these texts. This allows me to begin the process of seeing *Chachnama* as an Indic political theory of governance; it is fully immersed in its political, spatial, and textual context. Put simply, by displacing *Chachnama* from its understood language and genre assemblies, we can re-place it in a new geography and a new intellectual space.[1]

Chachnama claims to be a translation of an Arabic history and it calls itself a book of conquest (*fathnama*). This claim was read by colonial historians and archaeologists at face value. They chopped the text into excerpts and then interpreted them as evidentiary blocks for history. This chapter shows that, in fact, the claim of translation and conquest narrative ought to be understood as interlinked claims for authorial significance or the significance of particular literary cultures within elite publics in Sind. The significance of the claim of translation lies in the interpretative space this move for historical antiquity entails—that is, it is tied to questions of audience and prestige. A rebuttal of *Chachnama*'s claim of translation also opens up an examination of how *Chachnama* differs from the early Arabic conquest literature, as a text of that genre, and why we need to understand (and interpret) it as a political theory.

A Contested Geography

In any excavation of the Muslim past in India, geography gets to determine the status: the perpetual conqueror or the perpetual migrant.

Any of the descendants from Muhammad Sam Ghur in the twelfth century to Zahiruddin Babar in the sixteenth to Khan-e Arzu in the eighteenth have been rendered as outsiders. Thusly articulated, Muslim foreignness is also ever-present in scholarly understandings, which is predicated on the narratives of arrivals and origins across borders and boundaries that took shape along contemporary geographies. This work attempts to untangle such representations.

It is thus important to re-think geography for Muslim history in India. It is important to underline the interconnected nature of the city states in northwest and southwest India. They must be seen as dynamic lived spaces connected to other city states in Afghanistan or Central Asia and not merely as nodes in a military conquest. It is imperative to resist a distillation of experience into military events, for it forecloses meaning in the texts that emerged from these lived spaces. Through the prism of conquest, the histories of Muslim polities are little more than collections of names and occurrences in the conquered past of India.

Left unremarked are the social and cultural life during that time. Most generically, the very words "Muslim" and "Islam" were unquestioned categories although the words were the grounds for theological and political debate during the early periods of Muslim presence in India. The result is that a medieval author's identity is subsumed by his place of birth or putative sect and racial identification, even though those certainties are generally not given and are certainly not in the archive. For instance, though Juzjani's family was based in Lahore for two generations, yet he is considered as an outsider to Delhi.[2]

I want to situate the early thirteenth-century urban and political centers of the northwest (Samarkand, Bukhara, Ghazna, Ghur, Kabul, Lahore, Multan) and of the southwest (Multan, Uch, Diu, Muscat). The farthest distance between these nodes of trade and power is roughly 300 miles, with multiple networks connecting one node to another. Since the tenth century, these cities had constituted a remarkably vibrant political and mercantile life and were tied to hundreds of smaller economies.

Within this cosmopolis, Uch and Multan (which lies 70 miles northeast of Uch) need particular attention. Dating to the turn of the millennium, the histories of these cities are generally narrated as histories of conquest.[3] Multan and Uch were settlements of considerable merit and are attested in accounts from the fifth and sixth centuries.[4] Multan was a known center for pilgrimage to the sun temple since the third century.[5] Uch, Mansura, Diu, Broach, Cambay were nodes which connected to Aden and Muscat on the one end and to Lahore and Kabul on the other. A sketch of these political regimes will help illustrate the political dynamics of the thirteenth century and make the argument for why a text such as *Chachnama* was written.

Sebuktigin was a "Turk" general and governor of the Samanid polity at Ghazna (presently Afghanistan). In 962, he established himself as a nominal Sultan—retaining the claims of the Samanid and the `Abbasid as overlords—and began military expansion into northern Punjab. By his death in 997, he had acquired a number of forts from the Hindu Sahi polity and extended his dominion over Ghur and Makran. His son, Mahmud (d. 1030), continued to consolidate his power into northern Punjab and Sind, wresting control of Multan and Mansura from their Isma'ili rulers. Mahmud led more than twenty campaigns to Sind between 1001 and 1027. These campaigns have achieved totemic significance (popularly as "seventeen attacks") in contemporary historical memory, and they are the reason why Mahmud is remembered as a temple raider or destroyer. A significant motivation for his campaigns was the desire to gain favor with the `Abbasid court; destroying the Isma'ili political rule in Multan would have easily achieved that goal.[6]

Mahmud's empire, the Ghaznavid (r. 962–1186), was followed by the reign of Mui'zzuddin Muhammad bin Sam Ghur (d. 1206), who emerged from Herat and conquered Multan and Uch in 1175, Daybul in 1182, and Lahore in 1186. Sam continued expansion toward Delhi from Lahore and directly engaged the surrounding polities of the Chauhan, the Chandella (based in the Bundelkhand region), the Gahadavala (whose capital was at Varnasi), and the Chalukya. He suffered some setbacks: in 1188 he was defeated by Prithviraja of the Chauhan at Tara'in and was forced to retreat to Ghazna. Yet by 1192 he was permanently established near Delhi, controlling a string of forts that allowed him access over the northern Gangetic plain with a capital at Lahore. Alongside his lieutenant Qutbuddin Aybeg (d. 1210–1211), he launched expeditions into Rajasthan, Gujarat, and the Deccan.

After Sam's assassination in 1205, Aybeg went from Delhi to Lahore and declared himself sovereign, setting up a new struggle among Sam's warlords for the control of Lahore, Uch and Delhi. Aybeg's death in 1210–11 fractured the eastern frontier of Sam's realm even further among his various lieutenants (*ghulam* meaning slave-lieutenant). One, Shams al-dīn Iltutmish set himself up as a ruler in Delhi. Another, Taj al-Din Yildiz in Ghazna. Another *ghulam*, 'Ali-yi Mardan, became Sultan 'Alauddin in Bengal. A third, Nasiruddin Qabacha, who had been in stationed in Uch since 1204, declared his own rule and occupied Lahore.

The scramble ensued among Yildiz, Qabacha, and Iltutmish to claim the major city-forts of Delhi, Multan, Lahore, and Uch. As their armies, consisting of Indic, Turkic, or Iranian troops, roamed from the hills of Peshawar to the plains of Lahore, these sultans rallied Indic, Turkic, or Iranian luminaries, intellectuals, and mystics to their courts in an effort to build political bulwark for their claim of supreme rule. Yildiz was forced out of Ghazna in 1215–1216, and he captured Lahore and marched on Delhi but was defeated and captured by Iltutmish at Tara'in in 1216. The battle for northern India was now between Iltutmish in Delhi and Qabacha in Uch. All of this transpired while the Mongol armies of Chinghiz Khan were assaulting Uch and Multan.

Qabacha at Uch

During this intense tactical and military struggle to control key city states in northern India, the western Asian Muslim polities were facing the rising Mongol. After the Mongol conquests in Khurasan, the easternmost frontier of the Muslim world—Sind and Punjab—became frontiers of last refuge. The Khawarzam Shahi polity, based in Samarkand, was defeated by Chingiz Khan in 1215–1218, pushing the ruler 'Ala'ddin Muhammad into Sind. His son Jalaluddin sacked Uch in 1224 after Qabacha refused to help him against Chingiz Khan, and Jalaluddin prepared to begin his march up to Iltutmish's Delhi. However, the pursuing Chingiz Khan reached him at Uch and defeated him. This was the first of many Muslim polities ended by Chingiz Khan. On his way back to Iran, Chingiz Khan besieged Multan in 1224, but Qabacha was able to fend him off there. Qabacha, however, could not bear the strikes of both Jalaluddin and the Mongols.

Tabaqat-i Nasiri, written by Minhaj Siraj Juzjani (ca. 1190–1260 CE), is a contemporaneous account of political rule in Delhi. His short biography of Qabacha is worth citing in full, as it discusses Qabacha's political and military maneuverings. According to Juzjani, Qabacha had unparalleled "foresight, wisdom, manners, and work ethic," and he served Sultan Mu'izzuddin Sam in many capacities. His bravery and leadership caused the sultan to give two of his daughters to Qabacha in marriage. Juzjani narrates how he reached Uch after Qabacha's defeat at the hands of Jalaluddin:

> When Chingiz Khan and Jalaluddin Khawarzam Shah fought near the river Indus, Khawarzam Shah entered Sind. He went to Daybul and Multan. After conquering Nanda, the Tartari commander Turbi No'in came to Multan with a heavy army and surrounded it for forty days. During the siege, Qabacha opened the gates of the treasury and gave grants to all the people. His wisdom, foresightedness, and bravery accomplished miracles that will be remembered until the Day of Judgment. This happened in 621 AH [1224 CE] [. . .]
>
> That same year, the writer of these words, Minhaj Siraj, came from Khurasan to Ghazna to Multan and via boat to Uch. It was the twenty-sixth of Jamadi Awal of 624 AH [1227 CE]. In 625 AH [1228 CE], control of the madrasa Firuzi in Uch was given to the writer of these words. [Also granted to Juzjani] was an appointment to the army of ʿAlauddin Bahram Shah. In 625 AH [1228 CE], Sultan Syed Shamsuddin laid siege to Uch, and Malik Nasiruddin [Qabacha] fled to Bhakkar. The sultani army continued the siege for twenty-seven days until the fort was occupied. When Malik Nasiruddin [Qabacha] learned of the fall of Uch, he sent his son ʿAlauddin Bahram Shah to Sultan Shamsuddin. When he reached the [besieging] army, the news of the conquest of Bhakkar also reached him [Bahram Shah]. Malik Nasiruddin [Qabacha] drowned in the river Indus. His life ended. Over Sind, Uch, and Multan, he ruled for twenty-two years.[7]

After Qabacha's death, Muslim political power in north India shifted its base to Delhi, but the world of the interconnected city states continued despite the disruptions of military sieges and outright destructions.[8] Such continuities deserve attention, for they too are symptomatic of the political order of the period. While Juzjani's statement about a "constant struggle" between Iltutmish and Qabacha can be read to emphasize only the political and military tussle between the two claimants, it also hints at the need to make cultural claims. The gathering of luminaries at court, the grants, and the commission of histories and poetic works were attempts to situate these itinerant warlords within Muslim pasts. Along with the panegyrists and historians, the warlords also tried to ally with the Sufi mystics. Both Iltutmish and Qabacha tried vigorously to gain favor with the great Sufi Sheikh Bah'auddin Zakariya in Multan. Juzjani's *Tabaqat-i Nasiri*, a universal history that begins with the fall of Adam to earth, is itself one key example of the work of cultural capital undertaken by Muslim authors in the service of these warlords. *Tabaqat-i Nasiri* was completed around 1260, long after the claims of Yildiz and Qabacha for Multan and Lahore.

For Juzjani, Illtutmish completed the flow of Muslim history. He was the one who unequivocally linked the frontier of Hind to Islam's cosmology, to the *sunna* of the Prophet, and to Islam's dynastic histories. Other works also furthered the conception of Islam's past comfortably ensconced in the hands of the frontier kings. These works, completed in the first half of the thirteenth century, include Hasan Nizami's *Taj ul-Ma'athir*, Fakhr-i Mudabbir's *Bahr ul-Ansab* and *Adab Harb wa'l Shaja'a*, `Awfi's *Jawami al-Hikayat*, Ibn Athir's *Kamil fi'l Ta'rikh*, Barani's *Fatawa-yi Jahandari*, and 'Isami's *Futuh as-Salatin*. Most importantly, these histories, biographies, and advice manuals were all consistently rooted in the Indic soil. This tumultuous geography of the early thirteenth century gave rise to a series of historical and poetic texts that addressed Muslim past in Sind and in India. The three authors attached to the court in Uch served through changes in political regimes and represented continuities across the transitions of political order.

Juzjani was a historian, poet, educator, and jurist who served in Uch and then later in Delhi. His grandfather, father (born in Lahore), and other relatives had served courts in Ghazna, Ghur, and Lahore as jurists, theologians, and diplomats. Juzjani came to Uch in 1227 and was made the principal of the school Madrasa-i Firuzi by Qabacha. After Qabacha's death, he was employed by Iltutmish as a scholar at court. Iltutmish charged him with giving weekly addresses from the threshold of the royal chambers before he returned to Delhi. Juzjani was there when the robes of investiture arrived from Baghdad to congratulate the new ruler, and he was there at the death of Iltutmish and the crowning of his daughter Razia as the new sultan. Juzjani went on to a remarkable thirty-year career with the sultans in Delhi. His life reflects the intimacy between political power and knowledge in the Persianate cosmopolis.[9]

Similarly, Muhammad `Awfi came to be in Uch in the early 1220s. He had earlier worked as a jurist in Samarkand, Bukhara, and then he went to Cambay in Gujarat. For Qabacha he worked as a jurist as well, and then he moved on to work for Iltutmish in Delhi. We do not know `Ali Kufi outside of what he wrote, and there is no indication of his career after Qabacha. However, in the introduction to his text, he stated that he spent the majority of his life in leisure and comfort but, due to the "accidents of life and the passage of time," he migrated to Uch and found favor with `Ain-al Mulk Abu Bakr Ash'ari, the chief minister of Qabacha, to whom he dedicated *Chachnama*. The availability of positions at courts for learned men attracted these intellectuals across the Persianate cosmopolis (to indicate a co-location with Sheldon Pollock's Sanskrit cosmopolis).[10]

The various polities centered at these city states mutated, expanded, or disappeared, but the city states retained linguistic, sacral, and cultural overlaps to the point that we can consider them a cohesive cosmopolis. Those who lived, worked, and participated in the social, political, or labor lives of these cities belonged to this *`Ajam-o-Hind* cosmopolis.[11]

The intellectuals of this cosmopolis navigated from city state to city state, performing functions of governance (jurists, teachers, diplomats, courtiers, and historians). They married into the royal households they served, forming a deep social link between the intellectual class and the monarchical families. Theirs was a polyglot world. Generally, Persian was the language of state apparatus and of elite cultural output while Arabic was the language of scripture, everyday religiosity, and the sacral sciences. The intellectuals were participants as well as producers in a bureaucratic and prestige-based economy of Muslim polities in northwest India. Their support and textual output was of prime importance to the governing elite. Such close ties among the political, sacral, and knowledge elite meant that power and prestige infused their textual productions.

Chachnama was a directly embedded in this cosmopolis with its fluid political future and its marked relationship to external conquest. It answers the tumultuous political and military present of the early thirteenth century through a theory of politics and an ethics of statecraft. It makes two claims—one of language and one of genre—to present its theory. It claims that it is a translation of an earlier Arabic text, and it claims that it is a text in the genre of conquest literature. In what follows, I take on these central claims of *Chachnama* and address them by reading the text alongside a constellation of contemporaneous texts and by examining the demands of genre upon this text.

The Claim of Translation

The leading argument and understanding regarding the role of language in polities in medieval India remains that of Mughal historian Muzaffar Alam. He has argued that Persian entered the Indian subcontinent's political and poetic domain via cities in Sind (Uch and Multan) and Punjab (Lahore) from the ninth century onwards. As Ghazna and Ghur, in central Asia, embraced Persian intellectuals and governors, so did Lahore and Multan, such that by the eleventh century Persian was the language of poetry, history, and certain monumental forms of the political regimes.[12] Significant institutionalization of Persian as a courtly and political language happened first under the Ghaznavid, then under the Delhi sultans, and finally under the Mughal regime in the sixteenth century. Alam demonstrated that the presence of Persian in northern India as well as the process of Persianization was a force of assimilation for the elite of a post-Mongol Islamic world, accentuating a more secular ethos over the sacral Arabic.

The political effort to utilize Persian as a language connecting Turkic elites in the city states of northwest India to Sassanian and Persian pasts came at one particular cost. It meant that the Indic or Hindavi context was deemphasized and, as a result, it made these elite "antitolerant."[13] In Alam's reading, the conquest of city states and the adoption of Persian were intertwined processes of wrestling an ethics (and a polity) away from the ethnic Arab or Arab Islam. Translation from Arabic into Persian was thus a key part of the process of Persianization. Alam notes a number of such texts leading up to the fourteenth century period, including Bal'ami's (d. ca. 997) translation of Tabari's universal history, Barani's (d. 1357) translation of the history of 'Abbasid vizier Barmak, and Tusi's (d. 1274) translation of Ibn Miskawa's book on ethics.

Though these texts are commonly understood to be translations (*tarjuma*), I follow A. C. S. Peacock in approaching them as transcreations or commentarial interpretations. Peacock has shown that Bal'ami cannot be claimed as a translation, though it is widely read as such. Peacock demonstrates that Bal'ami reimagined and rewrote Tabari's work under a "substantially different" method of writing history.[14] In contrast to the Arabic text, Bal'ami's work focused on the pre-Islamic prophets, made extensive interjections into the text with Qur'anic verses, and reimagined events from a theological perspective derived from surah 'Imran.[15] Bal'ami also emphasized prophecy and dreams as drivers of historical action, which Peacock reads as a gesture towards Shi'ite sensibilities but I am more inclined to see a performance of an ethical paradigm.[16] Whatever the interpretation, it is only after moving away from the fixity of "translation" that new analytics of the text emerge. For this reason, the text's claim as a translation requires parsing within the attendant social functions of this robust discourse.

How does *Chachnama*'s claim of being a translated text fit into the process described by Alam? The early thirteenth century in Uch is a unique space to deepen this reading of Persianization because we can colocate authors and texts through a transference of political power. Broadly, three types of claims are evident in the network of Persian texts surrounding the *Chachnama:* the Arab descent of the author, the Arabic origins of the text, and the Arab descent of the patron of the text. I argue that these claims are an assertion of the right to produce texts, to interpret them, and to present them to an elite ruling class. This elite class—itself diverse ethnically and linguistically—is also the audience best endowed with skills to understand the moral and ethical lessons in these textual productions.

The claim of Arab descent is frequent in the historical and poetic writings from the thirteenth century. Numerous claims link a text or a person to the Prophet's family or to early Muslims. Seen within the prestige economy of city states and courts, such a claim was often an argument for the prestige of the author himself rather than any indication of actual biological or textual ties.

Let me present two examples which demonstrate the presence and utilization of such claims in texts contemporaneous with *Chachnama*. The claim of Arab biological descent is also in Fakhr-i Mudabbir's (d. 1228) *Shujara-i Ansab*, which was written in 1206. The text is a genealogy (*tabaqat*) of the Turkic rulers until the taking of Delhi by Muhammad bin Sam Ghur. Mudabbir begins by presenting his credentials—a common trope in Persian historiography after Firdawsi. Mudabbir recounts that the project grew from his attempt to locate his own genealogy, which he thought was lost. It was only after Sam's taking of Lahore that Mudabbir "acquired documents of descent and foundations" in which his genealogy was traced back to the second caliph, Abu Bakr.[17] From this beginning, Mudabbir wrote, he began to think about how to expand the chart to include other caliphs, the rulers down to his time period, and his employer—the Ghurid. Mudabbir's tracing of personal prestige by biological descent from the Prophet's age to political prestige of the Turkic rulers created an early precedent that other authors of the thirteenth-century Persianate cosmopolis followed.

Translating or marking the genealogy of a text from Arabic into Persian was also a significant practice in the early thirteenth century. Hence, in 1224, Muhammad ʿAwfi began to translate sections from Arabic of Tanukhi's (939–994 CE) *Kitab Faraj ba'd Shidda*, which he dedicated to Qabacha.[18] Tanukhi's text represented a popular example of the *adab* (*belles lettres*) genre, which contained anecdotes of travelers facing wild animals or robbers or officials facing execution or penury because of a capricious ruler. In his preface to the text, ʿAwfi presents his humble offering to Qabacha, saying that "a beautiful bride who was hiding behind the Arabic script" can now be revealed "to the eyes of the learned Persianate betrothed."[19] The metaphor of the conjugal relationship was a common one with which to frame "translation" as an act of transcreation. ʿAwfi saw his role as making a literary heritage available to an appreciative and exclusive audience while also claiming newness for his work. ʿAwfi, however, abandoned this "translation" and instead wrote his own composition of the genre of traveler accounts in *Jawami Hikayat*, which incorporated stories from Gujarat, Uch, and Multan alongside accounts from Baghdad, Mecca, Medina, and Nishapur. In these two texts, 'Awfi links Arabic literary tradition to the Persian one, noting the intimacy of this act for his audience.

Muhammad 'Awfi also dedicates a text to a patron of Arab descent to mark his support of Persian arts and cultures. In *Lubabul albab*, 'Awfi genealogically canonizes the Persian-language poets in the Persian cosmopolis. He asserts that poetry itself was created by Adam, in Arabic letters, and later moved into the prose of different languages.[20] This origin story of language dovetailed with 'Awfi's assertion that he wanted to compose a genealogy of Persian poets because such a text existed only for poets of Arabic. This lineage has a parallel in 'Awfi's recognition of the biological claims of his benefactors. He dedicates his text to Qabacha's minister, 'Ain ul Mulk Husain ibn Abi-Bakr ibn Muhammad Ash'ari, and provides a detailed summary of that noble's genealogy back to the Prophet. A text that documents the poetical works of poets of Persian in India, dedicated to a noble claiming Arab lineage, demonstrates clearly the multiple sites of cultural prestige and polyglot literary cultures.

Let me turn to a contemporaneous text that enjoys political status similar to that of *Chachnama*. Juzjani drew upon both Mudabbir and 'Awfi to write his history of the period, *Tabaqat-i Nasiri* (completed 1260). In this work he also details his family's connection to the Prophetic past. He mentions that along with biological descent from the family of the Prophet, his grandfather was the recipient of several edicts from the court of the 'Abbasid caliph Mustadi (r. 1170–1180) and a robe of honor when he visited Baghdad after performing the Hajj.[21] Juzjani presents short anecdotal summaries of all of the prophets, the Persian kings, and the rulers in Central Asia, India, and Yemen until the reigns of Iltutmish and his descendants whom Juzjani served. The earlier *tabaqat* (stages or generations) are cited from various historical sources, while the later ones reflect his own testimony.

Throughout the text, Juzjani presents a paean to the elite and also highlights the governance of the political realm in which he participated. Kazlak Khan, for instance, is the first noble Juzjani describes in his section on nobility. After Uch's surrender, Iltutmish had appointed Kazlak Khan as the ruler over Uch, and Juzjani describes how he brought peace and prosperity to the city: "[Kazlak Khan] called back all who had scattered from the worries of war, and he resettled them. He provided sustenance for the elite and the common and gave them all equal justice." Juzjani's honorific for Kazlak Khan, *mulk* (king), is apt because these appointments mandated an open and fluid hierarchy of alliances.[22]

In his preface, Juzjani explains that during his duties as a jurist he came across a book which had been collected "as exemplum for the people: the lives of prophets, caliphs, and genealogies of past kings."[23] That book ended with the career of Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna, and Juzjani wishes to expand its "genealogy to include all the rulers and kings of Islam, whether Arab or non-Arab, from the beginning to now, so that the light of every ruling family would be lit in this gathering."[24] This he accomplishes by consulting "commendable" histories, which he rewrites in a language that is accessible to all who can reflect on it. There is both a recognition of the consequences of writing for the present and an overwhelming concern for posterity's judgment in his work.

In his preface, Juzjani states that he is a mere reporter and begs forgiveness if he has made a mistake.[25] At the end of his history, he invokes the immortal prophet Khizr to pray for the immortality of his work, and he consequently uses the name of his patron sultan.[26] There are two concerns visible in Juzjani's preface which overlap with ʿAwfi's concerns. First, he invokes Arabic textual precedent; his first citation is in the description of Adam's third son, Sheeth, where he cites Tabari.[27] Second, he traces genealogies of various members of the nobility and government.

Such insistence on biological or textual ancestors in Arabia should be read as the author's claim for an intimacy with the moral and ethical concerns that are in the text. There is a courtly discourse about the contents of each of these Persian texts, in their prefatory comments. Juzjani, ʿAwfi, and Kufi also offer a textual genealogy in their preface, and provide fodder for self-reflection and perspectives on political expedients for the elite. It is a sort of public reflection. Yet these practices of public performance and reflection and their social function are largely neglected by historians of the Delhi sultanate. In that historiography, the emphasis remains on *histoire événementielle.*[28] Yet there is ample evidence that the historians of the early thirteenth century, Juzjani included, saw pedagogy and self-reflection as key functions for their texts.

Thus we can place *Chachnama* in thirteenth-century citation practices that claim Arab descent for the sake of prestige. *Chachnama*'s dedication also fits it into a common courtly practice of narrating regnal and regional histories in order to advise the political elite who engaged in contemporary political struggles.

Let us now turn to 'Ali Kufi's *Chachnama* and examine its claim of translation. We have already established that translation from Arabic into Persian was common in early thirteenth-century Uch, as was the invocation of Arab descent for nobility. In his preface, Kufi elaborated on his decision to write a history as well as on how he acquired the means to do it. In 1216, at the age of fifty-eight, Kufi explained that he gave up all other concerns and decided to create "a book of exceptional beauty and grace" which would provide a guide so that the "slaves of the Prophet's world" would remain on the "throne of the kingdom, and their sultanate [would] remain strong." Kufi's aim for the text was indeed pedagogical:

> For every age, the wise leave a writing meant to inspire and educate their peers and elders. Such are the verses and prose that writers have left documenting the conquest of Khurasan, Iraq, Iran, Rome, and Syria. The conquest of Hindustan happened at the hands of Muhammad bin Qasim, and the Arab nobles of Syria and Islam were revealed in this environ, and from the ocean to the limit of Kashmir and Kanuaj they built mosques and removed Rai Dahar bin Chach bin Sila'ij from the throne of Aror, and the great commander Muhammad bin Qasim killed him [Dahar]. I wished to write a history that would detail the conditions of this region and its people and [Qasim's] end.[29]

Kufi began to look for sources to write this history of Sind. He recounted that he traveled to the city of Bhakkar (Sind), where he located a history unknown to the Sindhi elite. This was in the possession of a learned and pious descendant of Muhammad bin Qasim. In a section titled "Tarjam-e Kitab" (Translation of the Book), he writes,

> When this slave became acquainted with the book, he found it to be full of jewels of wisdom and pearls of advice in which many exam-

> ples of the bravery and courage of Arabs and Syrians were inscribed, and their stature and intelligence was evident. With every fortification that they conquered, they ended the night of unbelief and ignorance. In every region they entered, they glorified Islam and erected mosques with minarets and filled them with pious and ascetic believers. And to this day, the light of Islam, honesty, hard work, and knowledge continue to shine in those regions. And in each epoch that a slave owned by the Prophet ascends to the throne, once again, he strips the rust of ignorance away from the mirror of Islam.[30]

ʿAli Kufi is marking two explicit motifs in his preface: the linkage between the history of Uch and the history of Arabs, and the "renewal" of central principles of Islam. He goes on:

> When this fable of faith was taken from the veil of *Taz'i* [obscurity] and the cover of *Hijazi* [Arabic] into the house of Persian [language] and put in the strictures of narrative and the fabric of honesty and translated into the clothes of prose, I dove into thoughts of the great leader to whom this new and strange letter of conquest can be dedicated.[31]

Kufi remarks that translating the text from one language to another is an interpretative act—he can present the thoughts in the text to an appreciative audience. This immediate linking of translation to patron, places Kufi's project among earlier "translation" projects I detailed above. Kufi uses the metaphors of marriage to reflect the intimacy between languages. Kufi does not provide the name of the original Arabic text he claims to be using. Nor does he provide any indications as to its provenance; there is no convention requiring him to do so. Kufi has to only assert such descent, not to demonstrate it. Kufi returns to the claim of translation in his closing remarks:

> Even though this [Arabic] book contained great wisdom, a wealth of advice, and methods for the running of the affairs of government, even though this book had a great standing in the language of Arabs and in the diction of Arabia, and the notables of Arabia read it with great fervor and were proud of it, yet, it was behind the veil of Arabic and devoid of the decoration and beauty of the Persian and, for this reason, did not circulate outside of Arabia. For the Persian speakers no one adorned this bride, a book of conquest [*fathnama*], or dressed

> her with garments of exquisite language, justice, and wisdom. No mighty rider took this horse into the grounds of clarity and the gardens of loquaciousness. But when the hard accidents of the world headed toward this weak one ['Ali Kufi], and the harshness of the times anchored its sail in his chest, and all manner of difficulties asserted themselves, and everywhere he turned, he saw dangers and treasons, then in that same condition, this man of incomplete intellect chose to finish this book. Praise be to Allah, the God of All.[32]

Kufi explicitly details the social function of his text—reflection for justice, and wisdom for a troubled elite. He also endows the text with the gravitas of tradition by linking it to this previous and popular Arabic text.

For *Chachnama* and the other texts under discussion here, the invocation of Arab textual and biological past indicates continuities with the past and a presentation of history for the purpose of political theory. Removing *Chachnama* from the frame of translation allows us to re-think the social function of the text. We can see that the choice of the genre of the text, a conquest narrative, was a deliberate choice by Kufi and that opens up a critical window into the early thirteenth century.

The Claim of Conquest

The early Muslim understanding of world *qua* frontier is primarily locatable in the Arab conquest narratives—the genre being *fathnama futuh*; literally "opening" and colloquially translated as "Books of Conquest." This genre emerged from "Life of the Prophet" (*sira*) texts. The accounts of the Prophet's military campaigns laid the foundation for the development of conquest literature during the late first and early second century of Islam.[33] The genre of *futuh* had both a historiographic and a political function in early Islam. It asserted the inevitability of the domination of Islam, and it bolstered the claims over the conquered populations.[34] Fred Donner has argued that the conquest narratives served the purpose of legitimization of political authority or genealogical claims of supremacy and came along with a strategy of construction of garrison towns and forts where nomadic tribes were settled.[35]

As the genre grew, it developed into a crucial commentary (and source) on a range of issues, such as conversion, taxation, administration, and, more thematically, Islam's encounter with conquered populations. In their temporal range, texts in this genre begin with the narrative of the campaign under the Prophet (or the first caliphs) and lead up to the present of the writer, which extended from the mid-seventh century to the mid-ninth century or beyond.

The conquest narratives maintained a specific structure. The report would explain a chain of transmission from an eyewitness or near eyewitness down to the author of the text. Next came an introduction of the participants in the event (often with details of their tribal affiliations). Finally the author would provide the account of the event, marked with poetic and Qur'anic quotes and highlights of piety, bravery, and individual valor. The reports were divided broadly by geography and chronology, telling about military appointments, sermons, speeches, letters, and the moral aftermath of decisions. The earliest extant narratives—such as the *Ta'rikh Futuh Sham* (Conquest of Syria) by Azdi Basri (d. 810)—illustrate the regional focus. Conquest narratives were repositories of biographical, historical, administrative, and ethical data for early Islam and became key sources for the works of geographers, universal historians, and compilers of biographical dictionaries.

In `Ali Kufi's text, there are the roughly thirty broad, generic citations but no particular names. This practice does not follow literary conventions of Arabic historiography, where specific names are always used. Instead *Chachnama* reports begin with attributions like "the wise of Sind say" or "some of the Brahmins of Aror report." Those rare citations that do evoke authoritative transmission quote the ninth-century Arab historian Mada'ini: "Farsighted wise men and well-meaning elders report from Abu'l Hasan," "Abu'l Hasan heard it from Hazli," and (in the only citation of a direct transmission), "Muhammad bin `Ali and Abu'l Hasan Mada'ini report." These are not the conventions of historical writing in Arabic conquest literature; there, reports from the field are presented with a full transmission history. Hence, we can conclude that `Ali Kufi relied on a series of texts to compose an original work in Uch, speaking to his contemporary audience by means of a history and advice manual, couching his own work in the prestige economy of Arab descent.[36]

If we take Baladhuri's *Futuh Buldan* as typical conquest narrative, divided into regions, then years, then participants, with each event narrated through textual or oral citation, *Chachnama*'s structure, by comparison, is markedly different. *Chachnama* begins in city states and focuses entirely on personages (Chach bin Sila'ij, the queen, their son Dahar). It highlights the condition of Aror prior to Chach's arrival at the capital; Chach's employment as a scribe for the king's chief minister; the manner in which the young queen falls in love with him and schemes to place him upon the throne after the death of the king; Chach's reconquest of "the four quarters" of the kingdom; his treatment of civilians and cities; Chach's two sons' tussle for the throne after Chach's death; the treacherous way in which Dahar takes over Aror; and finally the set piece: the marriage of Dahar to his own sister. All of this, constituting the first third of *Chachnama*, has three overarching themes: the ruler's basis of legitimacy, the good counsel of the advisor, and the immorality of treachery. ʿAli Kufi attributes information from this section to various sources: the tellers of tradition and authors of histories, the author of this romance and the writer of this bouquet, writers of the story of this conquest, and so forth. There is no attention to the citation precedence that was observed by Baladhuri.

The next portion of the text dealing with the Muslim campaigns is introduced under the heading "A History from the Righteously Guided Caliphs to Walid." This chapter heading is quite similar to the chapter headings of any annalistic history (such as Tabari's). Yet even the episodes in this section are attributed to the generic "tellers of traditions," with an odd mention of Mada'ini. Unlike Baladhuri's work, however, *Chachnama* focuses on the inner turmoil, deliberations, doubts, and planning of the campaigns. A typical conquest narrative would not refer to earlier episodes in the text, but *Chachnama* deliberately mirrors the campaigns of the Muslim Qasim with those of the Brahmin Chach. Qasim even plants a Muslim standard at the very spot where Chach marked the extent of his kingdom with a tree. *Chachnama*'s Muslim kingdom of faith explicitly restrains itself within the previous political boundaries of an Indic polity.

Chachnama's truncated history, beginning with the foundation of a Brahmin polity that is later mirrored by the Muslim one, is at odds with any text in the genre of conquest literature. Just as we cannot take at face value *Chachnama*'s insistence on being a translation, we must reject the invocation of the *fathnama* as its historical perch. *Chachnama* does not posit an expansive geography with a triumphant Islam; nor does it offer a clear case for the political authority of Islam. Its presentation of the pre-Islamic period is in sharp contrast to the typical conquest narrative.[37] Here is *Chachnama*'s opening, describing the city of Aror and the polity of Sind:

> Reporters of tradition (*ravian-e hadiṣ*) and authors of histories (*musanifan-e tawarikh*) describe thus the city of Aror, which was the capital (*dar ul-mulk*) of Hind and Sind. It was a grand and lively city, ornamented with palaces of various kinds, wide and colorful roads, streams, fountains, gardens, and orchards. It was founded by the shore of the river Sehwan, which is called Mehran.
>
> The king of this lively city was Rai Sihars bin Sahsi, whose treasury was full and coffers plentiful. His justice and his generosity were known around the world. The limits (*hadud*) of his polity (*mamalik o masalik*) extended to the north until Kashmir, to the east until Makran, to the south until Daybul and the shore of the Great Sea (*lab-e ab dar'ia-e muhit*), to the west until the mountains of Kikanan. To his four provinces he had assigned four governors (*mulk ra*).[38]

In Baladhuri, the land was devoid of sustenance, and the geography evoked only trepidation. In *Chachnama*, the reader encounters a strikingly different geography, focusing on urbanity as well as on civic and political order. Baladhuri described the frontier as a volatile and turbulent one: "Governors were dispatched to Sind, they fought the enemies, collected the little tribute available, and suppressed the people who rebelled."[39] As it progresses through the Umayyad regimes and into the ʿAbbasid era, Baladhuri's narrative sustains the constant theme of disruption and distress.

In contrast, *Chachnama* begins with claims of stability and of limits on political power. *Chachnama* describes the conquest of Sind after Chach takes the throne of Aror with the help of Queen Rani Sohnan Devi. He must embark on a campaign to conquer or ally with the four provinces of his polity. The first city he approaches is the city of Uch

(*Iskalanda*). In the city was one of Chach's confidants, to whom Chach has promised the position of mayor of the city should he manage to kill the governor. A man named Brave (*Shuja*) does so, and Chach is able to take over the fort without bloodshed. The nobles and elite of Uch welcome Chach as their lord and shower him with gifts. After Uch, Chach proceeds to Sika, then to Multan, and finally toward Kashmir. When he reaches the edges of his kingdom, he asks for two plants:

> One "misr," meaning *sapidar*, and the second "deodar," meaning *sanobar*. He planted them at the border (*sarhad*) of Kashmir at the banks of the river Punj Mahiat, at the base of the mountains from which this river flows. He stayed there until the branches of the two trees were intertwined. Then he made a mark (*dagh*) on the trees and said, "This is the limit (*hadd*) of my kingship. Ahead of this is the kingship of the raja of Kashmir, and I will not cross it."[40]

The limit to conquest, or a political regime that is not interested in constant expansion, is not a notion present in conquest literature. *Chachnama*'s radical presentation of it here is certainly new in the Muslim historiography. Chach connects the limit to native poplar and pine trees and demonstrates the patience required for the trees to grow up and merge with one another. *Chachnama* is creating for its public an idea of a limited kingship that insists on cooperation and negotiation with rival powers.

I will add one more significant aspect: Chach does not enter into any direct negotiations with the raja of Kashmir in this narration. In effect, Chach is recognizing the limit of his kingdom *without* testing it, and he is affirming the rule of the other over the adjacent space. However, the intertwined trees—one representing Sind and one Kashmir—also gestures toward the possibility of mutual comprehension of this limit to power. In other words, by declaring the limits of his kingdom, Chach asserts that the Kashmiri polity will also understand it. After satisfying the northern limit, Chach heads to the west. After subduing the governor there, he plants date-palm trees (*darakhtan-e khurma*) to mark the limit between Makran and Kirman. By the edge of the groves of palm trees, he installs a marker (*dagh*) that states, "This is the limit of the polity of land of Sind, during the reign of Chach bin Sila'ij, and *to this day, that limit remains*."[41]

The recognition that the limit of Sind extends to the present of the *Chachnama* directly connects the temporal regime of the *Chachnama* to the thirteenth century. It connects the notion of a limited, dialogic imperial formation as a possibility for the Muslim regimes of Qabacha. It evokes the caution of Beyhaqi, as I discuss below, that needless conquest or warmongering does not benefit the polity. It also goes further by making this limit an inheritance for the Muslim conquest. The Muhammad bin Qasim narrative cycle in the *Chachnama* traces Chach's conquest journey, with Qasim planting flags for Islam at the same location where Chach planted trees.

The theme of restrained power is emphasized when Muhammad bin Qasim marches his army to the "limit of Kashmir by the river they call Panj Mah'iat, where Dahar's father, Chach Sal'aij, had planted the *sapidar* and *sanobar* trees and marked the limit of his domain. Muhammad bin Qasim reached that mark, and he renewed his commitment to the limit."[42] It is now that *Chachnama* thoroughly reconfigures the notion of the frontier as a spatial organization of political power or anxiety to one of antecedent and tradition. Where Chach marked the limits of his polity and asserted his centrality within those boundaries, Qasim renews that vision and appropriates it for the Muslim polity that he is founding.

In form or in theory, *Chachnama* cannot be considered a text in the genre of conquest literature. Instead, it is political theory that is deeply ingrained in the physical geography and spatial constructs of the thirteenth century.

■

What was *Chachnama*? Why was it written in the early thirteenth century? What was particular about that moment that necessitated this work of historical imagination? Before I turn toward the claims of the text, I want to declare that *Chachnama* provides a clear understanding of the social function of historical writing. This understanding was derived from the history of Beyhaqi, written during the reign of the Mas'ud of Ghazna (r. 1030–1041). A closer look at Beyhaqi's *Tari'kh* reveals that its model informed Kufi's work (as well as that of Juzjani). Beyhaqi's history is genealogical and chronological, drawing upon the model of regional histories. In addition to accounts of rulers, governors, and events, it includes theories of governance as well as moral and ethical advice for the political ruler. I highlight a sermon Beyhaqi that he reproduces in his discussion of the year 421 AH (1030 CE). This passage contains a philosophy of history that illuminates the work of *Chachnama* as well:

> My aim [in writing history] is not to explain to the people of this present time the exploits of Sultan Mas'ud, may God illuminate his proof, because the people have themselves seen him and are well aware of his greatness, his courage, and his uniqueness in all matters of government and leadership. Rather, my aim is that I should write a foundation (*paya*) for history.[43]

With this sense of a futurity, Beyhaqi explains that his text is written to "monarchs and to others so that each class of persons may derive profit from it according to the amount of their knowledge."[44] That is, this is an ethical and moral lesson for his audience. Beyhaqi opens with praise for the great kings of the past—the Greek Alexander and Persian Ardashir—and instruction on what one could learn from them. He criticizes Alexander for his lust for conquest: "But what is the point of wandering around the world? A monarch must keep a tight rein, for by seizing some realm and region but failing to maintain his grip, and then impetuously moving on to invade yet another land, and repeating the same process and abandoning it, he would have given full scope for all and sundry to call him weak and impotent."[45] Beyhaqi follows this admonition to *govern* rather than *conquer* with a long excursus on the role of prophets and kings as leaders and guides to the people. He does this by glossing verses from the Qur'an and incorporating examples from the past. Finally, he concludes by writing another section "describing the qualities of the wise and just man which entitle him to be called meritorious, and what the defects of the tyrannical person are, such that he may inevitably be called ignorant and uncouth, and it will become apparent that, whoever is stronger in wisdom will attract more praise, and whoever has a smaller intellect will be held in less esteem."[46] This is then both a philosophy of history and a political theory for the elite. *Chachnama* is a project in Beyhaqi's tradition of presenting accounts of the past as political theory for the present.

By unmooring *Chachnama* from the overdetermined claims of language and genre in the text, we can consider alternative understandings for the text. Having built a textual context for *Chachnama*, in the following section, I want to pivot toward space, highlighting how geography informs *Chachnama* as a political theory.

The Claim of Empty Space

Henry Cousens's work for the archaeological survey of India on "the northern frontiers of Sind to the River Savitri" was done from 1891 to 1893.[47] Out of this, he produced two significant reports: one on northern Gujarat in 1903 and one on Sind in 1905. He begins his section on "Muhammadan Buildings in Sind" thus: "Of Hindu remains in Sind, little is to be found, owing to the havoc wrought by the Arab conquerors. That such buildings did exist is plain from the great temple at Deval [Daybul], which they destroyed, and the fragments built into the tomb of Nindo at Thatha."[48] Here is the cleanest distillation of the origins narrative: the invocation of the conquest, the enumeration of the destruction in 712, and the condemnation of a foreign Muslim presence. Before proceeding to his findings from the archaeological survey, Cousens sets the ground with a textual history of this particular past. "The most lucid account," he writes, "is to be found in the *Chach Namah* which is a Persian translation of a work written by `Ali son of Muhammad Kufi in A.D. 1216" and which "was originally written in Arabic very shortly after the events it records."[49] Cousens proceeds to present a detailed summary of *Chachnama* as a historical account of the eighth century and as a preface to his discussion of the excavations in the various sites in Sind (Bhanbhore, Brahmanabad, Daybul).[50] His ten-page summary of the text details particularly the section on Muhammad bin Qasim because it helps "identify some of the ancient sites of Sind, whose traces are now very few or are in great part obliterated."[51]

Imperial archaeological excavations in Sind, tied to the Indus civilization and to the Alexandrian conquest, were of primary importance to the British mission after the annexation of Sind by the East India Company in 1843. Almost every archaeological text, and nearly every British colonial work dealing with Muslims or Sind, quotes the *Chachnama*.

Why does *Chachnama* become the central evidence explaining the origins of Islam in India? Cousens clearly articulates what he understands *Chachnama* to be: a history of the early eighth-century Arab conquest, written at the time of the events, that survived with the descendants of the Arab commander Muhammad bin Qasim until it was translated into Persian in 1226 CE by ʿAli Kufi and then circulated until the present. It is, Cousens believes, a text closest to the historical events of 712 CE, with testimony from direct participants. Further, it is a narrative of the conquest of an indigenous population by outsider forces that shows the prejudices of the conqueror and the destruction of the conquered. In Chapter 6, I detail how the East India Company's colonial conquest of the princely state of Sind dovetailed with the anointing of *Chachnama* as the central conquest narrative, and how *Chachnama* was selectively excerpted to represent "Muslim despotism" in colonial historical writings.

Identifying the text as an eighth-century document of the Arab conquest allowed Cousens and other colonial archaeologists, historians, and agents to claim that "with regard to the Arab dominion in Sind, it is impossible for the traveler to wander through the land, without being struck with the absence of all record of their occupation."[52] The physical or territorial "absence" that Cousens noted is linked again to *Chachnama*, which ended its narrative in 714 CE. The history "missing" in the *Chachnama* became the corroboration of the seeming absence of the Arabs in Sind. The text is displaced from the thirteenth century, obscuring the lived histories of 500 years of Muslim political and social life in Sind. For Cousens, the text's significance is in its movement from one language to another (Arabic into Persian) and he can excavate the geography which is described in that text to confirm its facts. Yet, due to the material absence of any indicator of Arab conquest in Sind, Cousens concludes that the textual source, *Chachnama*, is the only source for the eighth century. Cousens reports Sind as a land empty of remains of Arab settlements and as one where Muslim fanaticism had destroyed all traces of pre-eighth-century Hindu past.

We have now seen the ways in which *Chachnama* describes geography as lived in, with plantations, cities, and various peoples and communities. How can we read *Chachnama*'s description of Sind then? Having shown that the text's claims of translation or genre cannot be taken at face value, we can place *Chachnama* in a lived and fully articulated geography that connects Sind to Gujarat and to Oman. There is a social world that surrounds *Chachnama* and, contra Cousens, it is not an empty landscape. This region—largely absent from contemporary scholarship that focuses on Delhi—is built on networks of mobility, settlement, and trade. This social world extends from the shores of Oman and Yemen to the port cities of Diu, Surat, Daybul, and Uch to the desert forts that link Multan to Surat.

I want to turn, at the end, to another near-contemporary text from the same locale as *Chachnama:* 'Abdur-Rahman's *Samdesarasaka,* which was composed in Prakrit, near Jaislamer, sometime in the late twelfth century.[53] The poem is written to emulate and subvert Kalidasa's *Meghasandesa*—the account of a journey of a cloud bearing a message from a husband to his wife. Where Kalidasa's cloud travels from Ramagiri in the south to Alaka in the Himalayas, 'Abdur-Rahman's traveler is asked to take a message from Multan to Cambay. Where Kalidasa gives the perspective of the male *yaksha* pining for his female lover, Rahman highlights the female *virahini* left at home while the husband makes a living far away. Where Kalidasa's text is imbued with sacral geography, Rahman reveals mercantile geography along the path anchored by Uch and the long strings of Cholistani forts. Rahman, who claims descent from western *mleccha* lands, begins his poem with a *hamd* (praise of God) that gestures to a Qur'anic verse:

> He who has created all this: the oceans, earth, mountains, trees
> and heavenly bodies—may He, O wise ones, bless you
> Bow down, O men of culture, to that Creator to whom men, semi-
> gods, and gods, as also the sun and the moon pay obeisance.[54]

To see Uch from the perspective of an inhabitant of this world, we need to read Rahman's description of Multan (*Mulasthana*) and its environs:

> If in the company of clever persons we take a stroll in the city, sweet melodies of Prakrit songs greet our ears. At places the Vedas are

> expounded by experts; somewhere the Rasaka is staged by the actors. Somewhere the Sudayavasta story is narrated, in another place the Nala episode; in yet another is recited the Bharta epic with various diversions. In some quarters selfless Brahmans are uttering benedictions; in others the Ramayana is eulogised. Some hear flute, lute, drums or tabors; some, the strains of melodies. Somewhere attractive girls are performing rhythmic movements. Troops of actors are giving wonderful dramatic performances and one who enters the courtesan locality would simply swoon from fascination.[55]

Rahman presents a world filled with stories, songs, and performances. He details the forms and figures of the courtesans who entice the traveler to the city—one with a forehead adorned with a *turakki tilaka* (Turkic ornament), perhaps a sign of mercantile presence. He then guides the traveler outward:

> And if one chances to wander beyond the precincts of the city, he sees such a variety of gardens as to forget the mansions altogether. There are Dhallas, Kundas, Satapatrikas and other countless trees. There are other strange trees also. The combined shadow of these trees making up a dense thicket stretching to the length of ten Yojanas.[56]

Rahman's description evokes a connected geography stretching between Multan and Cambay. The varieties of storytellers, performers, and scholars that Rahman places in Multan suggests a heavily trafficked area, and the description of built architecture and planned gardens presupposes political support. Rahman, a poet writing in Prakrit, achieves poetic excellence with a rare voice that describes the fluidity of city spaces such as Uch before the eleventh century.

The presence of a "Muslim" such as Rahman in Multan or Jaislmer or Cambay was the result of both the military and the political expeditions since the eighth century and the steady growth of mercantile activities in the Indian Ocean world since the ninth century. While Arab settlements between Aden, Muscat, Diu, and Thana predate the Muslim empires of Damascus and Baghdad, those capital cities' clamor for goods produced a flourishing of trade. These mercantile interests were commingled across political boundaries—numerous epigraphic traces of Muslim trading communities (often marked as *tajika* or *turakki* or *mleccha*) in Gujarat and Deccan survive from the ninth century onward, such that by the thirteenth century the Muslim communities contained "not only wealthy traders and particularly shippers and sea-faring men but also indigenously employed groups like oil-men, masons."[57]

The collective body of work by the Muslim geographers, produced from the mid-ninth through the mid-eleventh centuries, supports Rahman's account of a connected and politically important region. These geographies incorporated accounts from travelers, merchants, and other first-person observers. They describe the commercial routes that connected Sind and Gujarat and Yemen, and they detail the presence of various intellectuals, dignitaries, and elite from Iraq and Syria in Sind.[58] Considering these works together, we can see that this region intricately linked Arabia to India and that political alliances and trade networks flourished across the various principalities.

The earliest geographer of this region, Ibn Khurradadhbih (fl. 884), presented this world as a connected space.[59] His *Kitab Masalik wa'l-Mamalik* (Book of Roads and Kingdoms) was written around 876 CE, when Ibn Khurradadhbih served as the director of post and intelligence in the district of Jibal.[60] To get a sense of how populated this geography was, note how many settlements and cities Ibn Khurradadhbih listed in Sind and Hind: "Qiqan (Kalat), Banna (Bannu), Makran (Makran), Maid, Qandhar, Qusdar, Būqan, Qandabli, Fannazbur, Armabil (Las Bela), Daybul, Qanbali, Kanbaya (Gujarat), Suhban (Sehwan), Rask, Rur, Sawndra, Multan, Sandan (Daman), Thana (near Bombay), Mandal, Baylaman, Surasḥt, Kayraj, Marmad, Qali, Dahnaj, and Baros (Baroch)."[61] As one can get a rough idea, this geography of Sind encompassed lands from the far northwest mountain regions down to the plains of Punjab, along the river Indus and then to coastal towns across the Gujarat.

There are two specific themes to note in Ibn Khurradadhbih, each of which become reproduced in the works of subsequent geographers: First is the account of Multan as "a city known as *Farj bait dhahab* (Frontier with the House of Gold)" and second, is the laudatory description of the greatest king of Hind, Balhara, that is to say, "the king of kings."[62] Balhara wears a golden ring on which is inscribed, "He who befriends you for a purpose will turn away after its completion."[63] This could be the Arabization of the title *vallabha-raja* (the beloved king), which, if Ibn Khurradadhbih is reporting from the emissary's report, is conceivably the Rashtrakuta king of the Deccan, Govinda III (c. 793–814). More likely is that "Balhara" stands in for an Indic ruler sympathetic to the Arab Muslim polities. This theme of closely allied polities in Hind is dominant in the Arab geographies, including the most influential work of Mas'udi.[64]

Similarly, Abu'l-Hasan Mas'udi (d. 957) claimed to have traveled widely, reaching Hind in 915 CE. His *Muruj ad-Dahab wa Ma'adin Jawahar* (Book of the Meadows of Gold and Mines of Gems) devotes a section to Multan, where there are "one hundred thousand villages and estates" surrounding it.[65] He reports that in the town is an idol made of aloewood. To this, "the inhabitants of Sind and Hind perform pilgrimages by thousands, from the most distant places; they carry money, precious stones, aloes, and other sorts of perfumes."[66] Mas'udi mentions two stratagems that connect the Muslim rulers of Multan to their neighbors: one of negotiated existence and one of treaties and agreements. He also calls Balhara "the greatest of the kings of Hind in our time" and adds that the other kings of Hind "turn in their prayers towards him" in his capital of Mankir. This great king, according to Mas'udi, is a great friend of Muslims, allows flourishing mosques, and does not require Muslims to pay taxes. Mas'udi travels from Multan to Mansura to Cambay, which he declares is well known in Baghdad because of the sandals it produces.

Like Mas'udi, Abu Ishaq Ibrahim Istakhri (d. 951) may also have visited Sind. In his *Kitab Masalik wa'l-Mamalik* (Book of Roads and Kingdoms), Istakhri speaks of the idol located in the center of Multan. The idol, Istakhri notes, is seated and wears a red garment that obscures all but its ruby eyes. A crown of gold rests upon its head. He writes that the Muslim realm adjoins the realm of the king Balhara, who permitted the Friday sermon in his land. Istakhri's pupil Ibn Hawkal (d. after 973) writes in his *Kitab Masalik wa'l-Mamalik* that he met Istakhri in Sind. Ibn Hawkal's list of cities for Hind and Sind is completely identical, though he claims that these are cities he knows personally. He also mentions the adjoining king of Hind, Balhara, in whose kingdom the Muslim Friday sermon is read. His account of Multan is also identical to Istakhri's (including the idol that acts as a hostage for the Muslim governor), though he adds two key details: first that the pilgrims visiting Multan must pay a tribute to the governor, and second that the Muslim governor collects all of the offerings given to the idol and redistributes a small amount back to the caretakers of the temple.

In these recurrent descriptions of cities and settlements, we glimpse the politically volatile but intertwined life at the frontier. The accounts of battles, trades, and patronage of Muslim communities are authenticated with the epigraphic accounts such as the Chinchani charter from 926 CE that was found near Sinjan in Gujarat and that shows Krishna II giving his support to an Arab polity.[67] Patronage stories in both textual and epigraphic records from the pre-thirteenth-century world helps us imagine a diverse and interconnected frontier.

Was the world described by the Arab geographers and Rahman lost by the eleventh century? From ʿAwfi, we can see that the cultural memory of this world, if not its political realities, continued in thirteenth-century Uch. In the opening section of *Jawami Hikayat*, ʿAwfi narrates an anecdote from his time in Cambay: "In Cambay were a group of Muslims with pure faith" who lived alongside foreigners under the rule of Jay Singh. He had given them permission to build a mosque from which they could give public calls for prayers.[68] Some unbelievers attacked the mosque, killed eighty Muslims, and burned the mosque. The preacher of the mosque appealed to the ruler against the atrocity, but he was unable to reach him. Eventually he managed to meet Jay Singh during a hunt, submitting a petition written in "the dialect of Hindi."[69] ʿAwfi describes how Jay Singh puts on a disguise—very much in the spirit of the great ʿAbbasid caliph Harun ur-Rashid—and rides to Cambay to investigate this crime. Once he has asked around and learned that the mosque was indeed burned, he fills a jug with seawater and returns to his capital of Naharwala. There he fines all of the leaders of the community for failing to protect peace in his domain and gives the preacher four gifts for the reconstruction of the mosque and four canopies of intricate designs. These canopies, ʿAwfi claims, he saw with his own eyes.

Further evidence of a richly populated and vibrant world comes from the thirteenth-century Persian geographer Zakariya ibn Muhammad Qazwini (1203–1283). In his *Asar al-Bilad wa Akhbar al ʿIbad* (Monuments of the Lands and Reports of God's Servants), Qazwini praises the land of Sind:

> On my life, this is the land where when rain falls, milk, pearls and rubies grow
> Musk, amber, 'ud, and all the perfumes flourish
> The parrots are big as mountains
> such that elephants, tigers, and lions appear as child before it
> What fool can deny the richness of this land?[70]

The invocation of trade goods, of travel lodges, and of vibrant cities in Sind and Hind during the time of *Chachnama* is a forceful corrective to both the later British imagination of Sind and contemporary scholarship's focus on conquest and devastation (whether of Mongols or of Delhi's sultans) as the primary lens for seeing the thirteenth century.

What happens now in the task of unreading *Chachnama*? How do we read it? In an early essay on *Chachnama*, Peter Hardy confronted the question of thinking about this strange and influential text. He asked,

> Finally, one might at least put on the agenda for further inquiry the possibility that the text of the *Chach Nama* was regarded by Kufi as containing lessons for Muslim rulers of his own day. . . . Is the *Chach Nama* then, in the text we have before us, one of the outward and visible signs of a domestication of those new and Muslim rulers who, successors to the Ghurids, were establishing their authority in the northern part of the subcontinent at the beginning of the seventh/thirteenth century [AH/CE]?[71]

Hardy's suggestive reading from 1981 left no imprint in historiography. Though cast in functional language of political power, I find Hardy's agenda to be fully congruent to mine: *Chachnama* is a text containing advice, it is a text that creates a moral genealogy for rule, it is a text that argues for a framework for understanding difference (most critically, religious difference), and it is a text that demonstrates five hundred years of interconnected lives in the Sind-Gujarat-Oman-Yemen world.

In this chapter, I unmoored *Chachnama* from its traditional perch as a translation and a conquest narrative, and asked that we situate it instead as a text written in and speaking to a particular locality and a particular political concern. In this reading, *Chachnama* emerges as an Indic political theory. It is a text that imagines the creation of capitals, forts, networks of roads, and houses of worship as political acts with multiple agents—Muslim and Brahmin. It argues for the basis of a polity to emerge from negotiation and dialog, and it situates itself very consciously in an Indic milieu from which it gathers both cultural and intellectual succor. It is a text that does the work of interpretation: It moves apparently foreign rituals into a language of recognizable piety. But it does this not from a theological perspective, rather from a perspective of governance and of justice.[72]

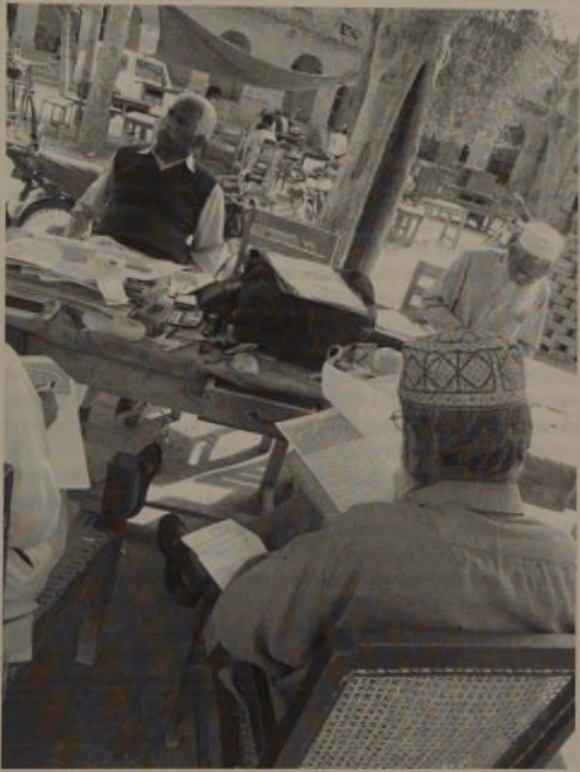
The next three chapters offer close readings of *Chachnama* as political theory. These readings are informed by my encounters with the people and landscape of contemporary Uch. I think through the text via the ethnographic encounters I have had in Uch at the tree that Muhammad bin Qasim planted next to the mosque he built and at the *jhund* (cluster) of date-palm trees that Chach planted deep inside the Cholistan desert. My reading of *Chachnama* and an excavation of the imagined world of the thirteenth century would not be possible without the questions which lingered after these encounters. In the next three chapters, I offer a close reading of the *Chachnama* through the lens of advice, of governance with difference, and of the calibration of gender and power.

3

Dear Son, What Is the Matter with You?

THE MORNING CHAI ROUTINE involved listening to petitions. Outside the local court building, petitioners lined up early enough to get the ears of one of the scribes. These officers of the court were responsible for selling the official court stationary on which legal writs were required to be filed. They also wrote, in longhand, the petition. Their annotations distinguished the "story" from the "facts" of the case.

I had begun my day at the courtyard listening to Murad Sahib, who was widely known as a historian of Uch. I had come to him to gather information about the local families who had textual sources in their archives. My query was open ended, and Murad Sahib had no concrete information for me. The families of Uch, he explained, do not traffic in manuscripts. I sat quietly, listening to him as he began to tell the story of Uch: "*Uch* was *Iskandria*. When Iskander began to look for *Ab-e Hayat* (Water of Life), he began from here and was lost in the deserts of Cholistan. He was looking for Khizr (the immortal Prophet) at the confluences of the rivers, and it was here that he founded this city with his soldiers."[1] I said something about similar stories of Greek bloodlines in the northwest regions of Kafirstan, but Murad Sahib gave no indication of having heard me.



Letter writer. (Photo © Manan Ahmed Asif.)

After a short while, he turned to his work, and I sat quietly observing. He received many visitors early in the morning—men going about their business who stopped to ask about his well-being and to give him news of theirs. These meetings, often no more than a handshake and a quick exchange, were conducted in Seraiki, in Punjabi, or in Brohi. The status offered to Murad Sahib as a historian of the community was clear in each encounter that I witnessed that morning. Many of the visitors engaged in long conversations about inheritances, work, marriages, and business, asking Murad Sahib to correct their account or give an account for their understanding.

That morning there were two men who had complaints lodged against them for diverting water meant for other fields, and they were at the courthouse to submit a statement in their defense. Murad Sahib listened carefully to their story and asked them questions to clarify their narrative. Once the account was settled, he took out a sheet of 300-rupee stationary and began to write the statement in his looping script. As he wrote, he spoke about daily business to the other scribes, to passersby, and to me (occasionally). His customers, the two men, sat quietly. After he was done, he advised them on where to go to file the paperwork as well as what to say, and he gave them specific names of clerks inside the building. The business concluded, the two men respectfully took their leave and departed with their letter.

Near the end of our conversation, Murad Sahib described how he knew the stories and lessons of *Chachnama* from oral accounts, and excerpted translations republished in cheap editions. When he was visiting the district court in Hyderabad, he had visited the Bhambore archeological site and thought about the distant history of this land. "*Chachnama* is a wise book of this very soil," he exclaimed, "with many lessons for us!" I began to understand through this conversation that *Chachnama* was a living text in Uch, with resonances in daily social life. This dimension of the history of a medieval text had not been apparent to me earlier. Our business concluded, I walked away from the courtyard, thinking about this question of "lessons." What lessons are embedded in this text from this soil? What precisely is the rubric for advice in *Chachnama*?[2]

Chachnama is a product of its time. It was written in the political capital of Qabacha's court, Uch, in the thirteenth century, and it reflected the political concerns of that time and place. In Chapter 2, I demonstrated that *Chachnama* cannot be read as a translation of a conquest narrative from the eighth century, but rather it is one text, among many others, of political theory from the early thirteenth century. How is political theory applied in *Chachnama*? This chapter argues that advice—dialogic, didactic, and demonstrative—is the mode for presenting a theory of politics in *Chachnama*. Letters are the primary means for communicating advice in the text; they are the clearest articulation of *Chachnama*'s theory of politics. Like Murad Sahib and the people he represents, in *Chachnama* there is an affective relationship between the advice giver and those who seek advice. This relationship is based on affinity, friendship, and a shared ethical framework. *Chachnama* should be read as a series of relationships within which advice is given, received, and contested.

What are these advice encounters like? What vision of politics does the advice in *Chachnama* put forth? I suggest that the letters represent a theory of governance and political theory that foregrounds accommodation and the building of alliances for ruling diverse communities in the thirteenth century. The letters demonstrate that a primary concern for *Chachnama* is differences between religious communities, political actors, and social classes. The first part of this chapter is a close reading of various letters in the text. In the second part, I consider how treating *Chachnama* as advice literature may put it in conversation with other forms of advice literature. In situating *Chachnama* in the genre of advice literature—in Arabic, Persian, and Sanskrit—I suggest that there are multiple intellectual genealogies that *Chachnama* draws upon to craft its political theory.

Advice for Divine Rule

Chachnama begins with a letter writer arriving at the court of Rai Sihasi in Aror, "the capital of Hind and Sind."[3] He introduces himself to Chamberlain Ram and Minister Budhiman thus: "My name is Chach, son of the temple priest Sala'ij. My father and brother live and serve at the temple at the outskirts of Aror and pray for the benevolence and extension of the rule of Rai Sihasi. I want to meet Minister Ram because he is recognized far and wide due to his wisdom and his capability. I want to work under him."[4]

The archetypal names for the courtiers—*Budhiman*, meaning "wise one," and *Ram*, the deity—highlight the normative power of their characteristic noted in the text: power, wisdom, and political action. Upon hearing Chach, the chamberlain praises his eloquent speech and asks him to speak of his training in the "arts of right conduct" and in the "arts of writing." Chach replies, "I have at my tongue the four books of Hind—Rg, Jj, Asam, Asrin."[5] As they converse, letters petitioning resolution arrive from the port city of Daybul. The chamberlain gives these letters to Chach, who reads them aloud in exquisite form and composes replies, demonstrating his vocabulary. The chamberlain is impressed and appoints Chach as his assistant in the epistolary office (*daftar-e insha'*). This is how *Chachnama* narrates the beginning of Chach's life at court: as a letter writer who advances quickly because of his wisdom.

From this beginning, the significance of letters, of letter writing, and of the utility of both to the art of governance is apparent in *Chachnama*. The letters—sometimes referred to in the Arabic *rasa'il* and sometimes in the Persian *maktubat* or *nabishtah*—are the most consistent narrative device throughout the text. They explicate, inform, propel, and shape the narrative and serve as the main demonstrative space for the political theory of governance. At key points, *Chachnama* quotes complete letters, such as that between Chach and his brother; between Chach's son Dahar and his brother Daharsia; between Hajjaj bin Yusuf and the Caliph; between Muhammad bin Qasim and Dahar; and most prolifically, between Hajjaj bin Yusuf and Muhammad bin Qasim. In all, *Chachnama* reproduces more than forty letters, often including full salutations and dedications.

In the following sections, I discuss two sets of letters and the way in which they lay out key features of the political theory of *Chachnama*: the role of advisors, the role of divine will, the importance of human agency, and the need to be just toward others. These letters need to be read *in pairs* because they represent the working out of a dialogic relationship between actors in *Chachnama*. They are the conversation through which one can see difference being narrated, asserted, and negotiated.

The crisis of succession is the most vivid political crisis in *Chachnama*. It is in this crisis that we see the clearest articulation of a theory of kingship: a king must rise to power with a combination of divine sanction and human will. This is perhaps unsurprising since it is the crisis of succession that itself informed early-thirteenth-century Uch—during this time, the military campaigns of Iltutmish, Yildiz, and Qabacha were raging around Lahore, Delhi, and Uch. As such, conflict over succession is both the lived reality and the imagined world of the text. To this political reality, *Chachnama* presents a theoretical world where power must be claimed and cannot simply be inherited. It must be asserted. The clearest invocation of this political theory is in the Chach cycle: during the campaign to conquer the four corners of Sind and after Chach has conquered the east, he turns his attention to the west and writes "with his pen," pressing the raja of Agham to surrender:

> You [Raja of Agham] consider yourself to be grand and of great birth and stature, but I did not get this polity as inheritance from my father or grandfather, and it is not mine to give in inheritance. It is God who has arranged for this, not my army. It is by the prayers of Sala'ij that the only God granted me this polity, and he will always stand with me. I do not need the aid of any other. He is the one who will ease my difficulties and make my movements easier and will grant me victory (*nusrat o fath*) over my enemies. He grants me relief in both worlds, and if you are confident in your strength, your prestige, and your magnificence, know that it will all decline, and retributive justice will fall upon your head.[6]

Chach states forcefully that it was not birth that made his claim to rule, but rather, good conduct yielded divine sanction. This is the theory of a normative polity presented in *Chachnama:* rule comes with divine sanction but with emphasis on the agency of the individual ruler. The divine will is known by the actors through divine signs. Prophecy and prognostication are an intimate part of *Chachnama*, and the text invokes them for both Muslim and Hindu polities.[7]

After Chach's death, the question of succession between his two sons is raised. Chach's polity could potentially be split between the two brothers Dahar and Daharsia. Or it could be split three ways, for his daughter Ma'in Bai was promised in marriage to a neighboring raja. It is in working through this succession battle in *Chachnama* that the relationship among rule, divine intervention, and political acumen is fully articulated. A noble in Dahar's court visits an astrologer and is impressed by his prophetic power. He reports back to Dahar: "May you live long, O Raja! In prosperity or decline the Raja should never break from the company of wise ones, poets, writers, and the learned class (*Brahmin*), because they are our leaders. One must visit them and give them respect and praise. For the prophecy (*fal*) that emerges from them is the best."[8]

Taking this advice, Dahar also visits the astrologer and asks about "the conditions to benefit my state, the laws governing society, and other ways to benefit the population such that my just reward is in the afterlife."[9] The astrologer tells Dahar that his stars are aligned and that he will live and prosper as a ruler. Then Dahar asks about his sister's fate. The astrologer answers that according to his calculations, she will never leave the fort of Aror, and her marriage will be to the raja who will rule all of Hindustan. This news shocks Dahar, for if the husband of his sister is the ruler of Hindustan, his fate is sealed. He goes to his father's counselor, Minister Budhiman.

The minister hears the conundrum that while Dahar is guaranteed prosperity and rule, his sister is meant to be married to someone who will be the king of Hindustan. He speaks:

> The work of maintaining a kingdom is delicate, O King, and there are various claimants to it—the neighboring kings, the armies, the servants. The wise say that five things cannot survive if dislodged from their natural settings: the king from his kingship, the minister from his ministry, the wise from his knowledge, the hair and teeth from the body, and the breast exposed. For the sake of kingship, the king must take the lives of even his brothers and relatives, or at least expel them from his kingdom. He does not allow anyone to meddle in governance—even the nobility. If a king removes himself from kingship, he is a mere commoner. Now that the astrologer has prophesied, you must make your sister Bai your wife and install yourself as the king. If you avoid contact with her, she will still be your wife in name, and your kingdom will be preserved.[10]

The minister lays out a hierarchical order of public good: the king in his kingdom is of primary importance. And although incestuous marriage may be publicly condemned, the consequences can be borne if the interior reality is not incestuous. The minister's formulation is akin to the formulations in the *Pancatantra* about the capacity of the owl to be a king, as we will discuss below. This formulation of the body politic is also present in the *Arthasastra* and later compilations such as the *Hitopadesa*.[11] The minister's advice, then, is that Dahar must do whatever he must to get the kingdom and then to keep it—including marrying his own sister.

But what about the perception of the public? *Chachnama* incorporates a fable here to showcase how a public charm or ruse (*talsim*) can direct opinion. The minister takes a sheep and plants soil and seed in its wool, watering it daily until grass begins to grow. Then he releases the sheep in public, and all the urban and rural dwellers (*shahri o rustai*) gaze in amazement. However, in three days, the novelty wears off, and no one pays attention to the wandering sheep. The minister turns to Dahar and says, "Whether good or bad, no talk remains on people's lips for more than three days. Neither a good deed nor a bad is remembered."[12] Dahar is convinced, and he sets out to convince his brother of this idea.

Dahar's exchange of letters with his brother showcases that advice is not simply asserted or accepted, it is the product of a contestation and dialogue. The first letter Dahar sends to his brother is with great humility and respect, informing him of the astrologer's prophecy and Dahar's decision. It concludes that Dahar sees no salvation except following the advice of the minister. In reply, Daharsia declares that this is an unpleasant prophecy and a foul act. "If you are undertaking this act for maintaining kingship, there is no recourse. But if you have any base desires then all treaties and agreements will be nullified, and you will face dire consequences."[13] Dahar assures him that he has no ill intentions, although he mentions that she is only a half sister and at that she belongs to a lower caste—a birth that condemns her with the lack of morals.

After receiving the letter, Daharsia decides to raise a small contingent of soldiers and visit his brother in the capital. He is still concerned that there is something foul in Dahar's intentions, even if the "letters are full of praise and conciliation." Dahar seals himself inside the fort, and the minister advises him to try to isolate his brother and kill him. Dahar refuses that advice, for he wants to reconcile with his brother. Conveniently, the brother soon dies from an illness. The divine will is thus fulfilled: Dahar marries his sister, and using his political prowess, he becomes the ruler of Chach's kingdom.

The letters exchanged between Dahar and Daharsia operate within the framework of divine will and political acumen. *Chachnama* emphasizes the eloquence and humility in Dahar's letters, harkening back to the skill and acclaim that Chach had garnered during his rise to power. The letters are set up in a dialogic confrontation: a diplomatic and well-crafted letter is necessary in a king's set of skills. However, Daharsia's skepticism of the sincerity of Dahar's letters highlights the capacity of beautifully rendered prose to obfuscate and distract. In effect, the narrative outside of the letters—depicting the minister's advice and Dahar's machinations—puts into relief a tension between narrative truth and moral truth within the letters. *Chachnama* asks us to imagine within that exchange a play of politics whereby contesting political powers can lie, cajole, plead, or assert their positions with false promises. *Chachnama* further complicates the question of political rule through the minister's advice and attestation that the public has a short memory, such that if necessary to retain power, a ruler can make an immoral choice. The public—defined as both urban and rural dwellers—will eventually forget or simply go along with the king's dictum.

Advice for Conquest

A second set of letters involve an exchange between Hajjaj bin Yusuf and Muhammad bin Qasim. It again demonstrates the work that epistolary exchange does in *Chachnama*—debating and resolving questions of political alliances and of accommodation of different communities.[14] During the campaign to conquer the fort of Nerun, Qasim pauses next to a lake of "water purer than the eyes of lovers and the garden more pleasant than the garden of Aram," and he pens a letter to Hajjaj, reporting on the conditions of the army:

> In the name of God, the Merciful, the Benevolent:
>
> I send this to the magnificent court of the king of nobles, the crown of faith, and the protector of Iran and Hind. I am your servant Muhammad bin Qasim. With due humility and servitude, I report

> that this dedicated servant and all the nobles, servants, warriors, and groups of Muslims are well and safe. We are striving to institute order and organization here. We bring to your luminous opinion the news that after traveling across deserts and lethal jungles, we reached the edge of the polity of Sind, and we have camped next to the river which is known as Mehran. . . . At the moment we are resting in the shade of a fort which boasts that it was built by the Roman Alexander (*Iskandar Rumi*) himself. Yet I am confidant in the mercy of the Great God.[15]

The ornate phrasing of the letter is stylistically distinct from the narrative voice of *Chachnama*, as is the replication of the salutations. Qasim goes on to detail the forts that have been conquered so far and to declare that they have "built mosques at the places of worship of the unbelievers and introduced into those mosques caretakers who can call people to prayer and proclaim the greatness of God."[16] After this strident note of hegemony over idolaters, Qasim lays out the possibilities of an ally in the land of unbelievers who might be able to help the Muslims in their campaign:

> There is a noble who rules to the north of Mehran, near Cambay (*jazira bahr-e kumbah ast*), and his name is Basami Rasal. His son is one of the notables in Dahar's court, and many kings of Hind and Sind have promised their fealty to him. He has approached us in hopes that we will make a truce with him. We await your guidance as we are awaiting results of that negotiation. If it works, we will have the means to cross this river.[17]

The letter lays out a competing vision for Qasim's campaign, asserting Muslim dominance but recognizing that the task is impossible without assistance from non-Muslims. The letter ends with another plea for God's mercy. Re-produced formally in *Chachnama*, this letter is a model of the epistolary genre, applying the techniques of narration, with honorifics, invocations from history, as well as direct citation from the Qur'an. At the end of the epistle is the critical part of the letter, where the possibility of an alliance is discussed and advice is requested.

Qasim's letter is immediately followed by Hajjaj's reply, which is the longest epistle in *Chachnama*. The first part of it reads as follows:

> In the name of God, the Merciful, the Benevolent:
>
> Dear son, Karim al-Dīn[Benevolent with Faith] Muhammad bin Qasim, may God keep you in esteem. I received your letter full of salutations and decorated with many elaborate dedications, and I read all the matter that you had inscribed within it. Dear son, what is the matter with you? What has happened that you cannot use your intellect (*'aql*), your reason (*tadbir*), and your counsel (*rai'*)? I wish that in warfare you would defeat all the kings of the east and destroy the cities of the unbelievers! Why are you unable to finish this small campaign? Why do you not surround the forts of the enemies and overcome them? I hope their plans will fail.
>
> He who hinders the cause of Islam's army, strengthen your heart, and spend any capital that you want on [this enemy's] other enemies, with riches and gifts raining on his opponents. If someone asks for land, grant it to him. Make [this ally's] name prominent in your peace treaties (*aman nama*) so that his heart is at ease. Because there are four ways in which a kingship is acquired: first, through consultation, alliances and treaties, and relation; second, through expenditure of wealth and grants; third, by knowing and understanding the ways and means of one's enemies; and fourth, by dominance, terror, magnificence, bravery, power, and strength (*r'ub o mahabat o shahamat o quwat o shaukat*).
>
> Make all effort to dismiss small enemies. Make all attempts to give grants to nobility and have their consent. Make true promises to them. When they come to you and of their own volition appoint a tax (*kharaj*), then take whatever cash or commodity they send to the treasury. If you appoint one of them as your messenger, make sure you have confidence in his intellect, foresight, and faith so that he will not bring discord into peace. . . .
>
> Invite the nobles to accept the faith, and if they do, reward them with wealth, governance, and land. If they reject Islam, caution them to remain faithful to the regime. If they rebel, threaten them with the righteous action against the rebellious.[18]

Where Qasim's letter expressed a hope to call all unbelievers to Islam, Hajjaj's letter counters that the only person who needs to accept Islam's supremacy is King Dahar. He suggests that other nobles, or the broader public, could be supported in their own faiths, as long as they agreed to obey the political power of the Muslims. The question of power in this exchange of advice is clear from the way in which Hajjaj begins his letter to the young Qasim—with intimacy and candor, quickly showing his exasperation at the halting campaign. The rebuke, "Dear son, what is the matter with you?" highlights the patriarchal nature of his advice, and the informality makes clear the dynamic of power at play.

In Hajjaj's formulation of difference between religions, the politics of the governed is paramount. Whereas Qasim narrates a dialectic of difference that must be overcome (mosques where temples stood), Hajjaj at first seems to offer a similar sentiment (destroy the cities of the unbelievers), but critically this is expressed as a desire and not as a strategy. The strategy offered by Hajjaj is instead to look toward accommodation as governance. The nobility's proposals of tax schema ought to be accepted without debate because their alliance is crucial to the establishment of a new governing regime, Hajjaj explains. Hence, the first path of gaining a kingdom is through peaceful alliances and understandings. As he details the ways in which Qasim could incorporate local nobility into his administration, Hajjaj also comments that Dahar should be given only one choice: accept the oneness of God or prepare to fight. The letter continues with Hajjaj responding to the strategy question that Qasim proposed about crossing the river Mehran to engage the troops on the other shore. He advises that the Muslim army must do this immediately so that Dahar is impressed by their confidence. Hajjaj then gives specific tactical advice—how to tie the boats together, how to position the army to assist in the crossing, how to assemble on the battlefield on the other side. Finally, he impresses upon Muhammad bin Qasim the need to follow his directions to the letter.

Chachnama then shows the divine sanction for Hajjaj's advice. It narrates how Dahar surrenders the fort after receiving a prophecy from his astrologer that the "fort built by Alexander" was fated to "fall to Muslims on 93 Hijri (711 CE)." Dahar dispatches the Buddhist caretaker (*samani*) of the fort to surrender peacefully to the Muslims. The Buddhist caretaker does so, and Qasim grants a robe of honor. Qasim then implements a scheme of religious accommodation for the population, enacting Hajjaj's advice.

The subsequent letters continue to develop the political and military strategy for *Chachnama*, providing the framework within which action can be understood. The two sets of letters I have chosen to highlight here share the theme of how kings and polities intersect. Reading them together reveals that *Chachnama* is advocating for a policy binding the king and his elites through a common goal of governance wherein retaining power is the supreme good. This good is sanctioned by divinity that is, in both cases, legible in the stars. This mutual legibility, by extension, makes their truth-claims compatible or, at the very least, comparative.

The letters demonstrate the necessity of dialogue in a political world that is defined through difference. The debate continues in other letters, with Qasim advocating more lenient policies and Hajjaj becoming more strident. The effect of these positions is to underscore the question of dialogue and strategy for the text. Each of these encounters is meant to be understood as the working out of differing positions. The moral weight of the text leans in one clear direction: accommodation. In linking the Chach and Qasim cycles narratively, and by making Chach the exemplar for Qasim, *Chachnama* creates an equivalence between the Muslim and non-Muslim histories, thus cementing its case for accommodation.

A clear articulation of *Chachnama* asserting equivalence is in the victory letter (specifically termed *fathnama*) that Qasim sends to Hajjaj after the defeat of Dahar and his army. At this moment of triumph, the letter begins on that strident note:

> To the commander of Iraq and Hind, Hajjaj bin Yusuf, with thousands of salutations from the servant Muhammad bin Qasim, who declares that the grace of God pitted the brave and hearty warriors of both sides against each other and gave victory to the army of Islam after their swords were wet with blood and made supine and defeated the army of Dahar, who possessed wild elephants. Their elephants, horses, cattle, slaves are all in our possession, and a fifth of it is dispatched to the capital. It is hoped by the grace of God that with this auspicious beginning, all the polities of Hind and Sind will enter into the domain of Islam.[19]

This victory letter contains a very noteworthy exception to the genre of victory letters in conquest narratives: the armies of *both* sides are praised, even if the commander Dahar is not. Alongside this generosity is the understanding that this is only the first phase of a wider campaign that is dependent on the blessing of God. This also recalls Chach's declaration in his letter to the raja of Ahujam. Qasim's victory is thus an analogue to Chach's, as the Muslim polity is a successor to Chach's. That God would sanction Chach's imperial formation just as he would Qasim's works in an ontological register but also in a legal register.

A dialogic form of letter exchange is used to address difference in the thirteenth century. Using this mode, *Chachnama* articulates the nitty-gritty modes through which one accommodates difference. A number of letters in *Chachnama*—including Hajjaj's brief to Qasim—advocate for making alliances where possible. After the conquest of Daybul, Hajjaj sends instructions on how to execute such alliances:

> After the conquest of each fort, distribute all gains on the maintenance of the army. Do not stop any one from eating or drinking the needful, and make sure that the supply of foodstuff is maintained so that the commodities for the army are cheap and accessible. What you rescued in Daybul, do not confine to treasuries. Instead, distribute it among the people, because after the conquest of the polity and the opening of the forts, one should strive to help the people (*ra'iya*) and the dwellers (*astamalat sakanan*), because if the farmers (*zara'i*), artisans (*sana'i*), and traders (*tujjar*) are at ease, the polity will be green and prosperous, by the grace of God.
>
> Written on the tenth of Rajab of the year 93.[20]

In another letter soon after, Hajjaj advises Qasim to grant "sanctuary to whomever request it, and when the elders and notables of the town approach you, give them significant robes (*khil'at*) and put them in your debt."[21] In these sets of letters and commands, Hajjaj consistently emphasizes the difference between the king, his elite, and the populace and that the Muslim army's chief concern is the populace and not the nobility. This is clearer when he chastises Qasim for granting a governorship to one of Dahar's nobles as a bribe, without first making sure that the noble was not taking advantage of Qasim's naivité.[22]

I suggest that the letters represent a thorough argument—with specific examples—for governance and a political theory that foregrounds accommodation and alliance building. *Chachnama*, read as political theory, reveals that cohabitation and cooperation have high strategic value. The making of alliances requires a broader strategy than that of domination. *Chachnama* provides examples and legal sanction for such a political theory.

A Genealogy for Advice

Chachnama places its advice in letters and in pronouncements. Therein the characters debate, resist, or adapt advice for their particular political context. What texts, intellectual traditions, or ethical frameworks did *Chachnama* draw upon to present its political theory? The arguments for building alliances, negotiating difference, and engaging in dialogue is explicit in *Chachnama*, but no direct citations orient the reader to sources that may have informed the nature of the advice that appears in the text. One can recognize some Qur'anic quotes, but there are other sources of traditions indicated in the text. *Chachnama* as a text of policy or advice is eminently locatable within Persian advice literature. In this last section, I show the ways in which Greek, Arabic, and Persian advice literature informs it—from the *Letter of Alexander* to *Shahnama*. To demonstrate the influence of a wider range of advice literature on *Chachnama*, I also review other Indic texts: the *Arthasastra* and *Pancatantra*.

Inserting *Chachnama* within such genealogical traces on advice literature helps us understand the production and consumption of this text. In that sense, the question of advice literature must be opened up more fully to articulate three temporally specific but overlapping genealogies for advice literature in India. These genealogies overlap in language, in form, in relationship to power, and in impact of their thoughts. In this discourse of advice, conceptual figures such as king, minister, and philosopher travel in various texts and in languages as diverse as Sanskrit, Arabic, and Persian. These figures enact and entrench political regimes.

I begin with Alexander of Macedon (d. 323 BCE), who was known in Persian as *Iskander* or *Sikander*. Alexander casts a long shadow over Uch and, consequently, over *Chachnama*. The story of that young conqueror who overcame odds is often tied to the story of the young Muhammad bin Qasim, both within *Chachnama* and in stories outside of it. Greek understandings of India—and by extension, early modern Europe's understandings of India—bear the imprint of the Alexandrian conquests. Within this discursive terrain, India is a place of marvel and wonder, where Alexander encounters supranatural and marvelous sights.

The earlier histories—such as the fifth-century-BCE treatise on India by Ctesias of Cnidus and Megasthenes's fourth-century-BCE *Indica*—emphasized the marvels of India. Ctesias was reported to have been a physician with the court of Artaxerxes Mnemon of Persia, while Megasthenes traveled to India with Alexander. Their texts, compiled in later works, provide geographical details peppered with fabulous reports of a land populated with animals of great size (ants, scorpions, and crabs), of people without heads and with eyes on their shoulders, of men who have faces like dogs, and of other men who have no nostrils and a single eye in their forehead.[23] Megasthenes's marvels of India were reproduced and augmented in Pliny's *Historia Naturalis*, finished in 77 CE, and in Solinus's *Collectanea Rerum Memorabilium* (Collection of Remarkable Facts), written in the third century. India, in these accounts, has preeminence as a land of great wealth and wonder. In Greek thought, these bizarre, extraordinary, and marvelous stories characterized India as frontier at the edge of the known world. In spite of the fact that some, like Strabo (b. 63 BCE), questioned the validity of these tales, such stories continued to dominate the Roman imagination regarding India.[24]

Within that tradition is also a tradition of advice literature, including letters exchanged between Alexander and Aristotle. These letters circulated in Greek, Arabic, and Persian as the *Epistola Alexandri ad Aristotlem*, or the *Rasa'il*. The *Letter* gives an account of Alexander's travels and tribulations in India during his pursuit of Porus's army. It depicts an India that simultaneously holds great wealth ("the walls were also golden, sheathed with gold plates the thickness of a finger") and great wisdom, challenging Alexander to possess both.[25] The *Letter*, presented by the collective Pseudo-Callisthenes (ca. 200 CE), formed the bulk of the compilations such as *Secretum Secretorum* and the Arabic *Kitab Sirr al-Asrar* (ca. 940). These are advice manuals focused on Alexander's conquest of India and the Aristotle's role as his philosopher-advisor.[26]

The *Letter* influences two particular strands of Indo-Persian historiography which we can trace in *Chachnama*. First is the representation of Alexander as a young and doomed conqueror. We find this specifically in *De Mundo* and the Pseudo-Callisthenes, in the histories of Ya'qubi (d. ca. 905), Dinawari (d. 903), Tabari (d. 923), Mas'udi (d. 956), and finally, Biruni (d. 1048). Alexander's exploits are a model or precedent for the Arab conquests of Iran and India.[27] In Mas'udi particularly, Alexander's letter to Aristotle about the House of Gold (*Bayt ad-Dhahab*) is quoted. Ma'sudi quotes Aristotle's admonishing the conqueror for being blinded by avarice, and then explicates the matter.[28] In Tabari's account, Alexander's conquest of India foreshadowed the struggle between Dara and Alexander for the conquest of Persia.[29] In these histories, the epistolary emphasis of Alexander's conquest is maintained, and the political theory is articulated through this dialogue between the advisor and the young conqueror.

The second strand of Persian historiography is the presence of Alexander as a heroic figure in Firdawsi's *Shahnama* (ca 1010) and the Persianate romances that followed. Minoo Southgate traced various storylines, motifs, and actions in the Fidrawsi, and forcefully argued that the Syriac Pseudo-Callisthenes is preserved in the *Shahnama*.[30] In Firdawsi, Alexander is the descendant of the Iranian king Darab, whose political and moral leadership is explicated via his dialogue with his half-brother, Dara, whom Alexander has to kill in order to conquer Persia. Firdawsi's Alexander narrative cycle contains critical aspects for my reading of *Chachnama*, specifically Firdawsi's comparison of Alexander to previous kings and the resonance in Alexander's actions with the deeds of others. This cyclical reading throughout the *Shahnama* has been studied by scholars (such as Peter Hardy and Julie Meisami) as a break from the Arabic historiography tradition.[31]

The Alexander narrative cycle in Firdawsi contains numerous letters: between Alexander and Dara, from Alexander to the people of Iran, between the Indian king Kayd and Alexander, between Alexander and Foor, from Alexander to the Brahmins, from Alexander to the emperor of China, and from Alexander to his mother. Firdawsi notes that some of these letters contain flattery and obfuscations, and some are filled with moral advice.

Firdawsi's *Shahnama* had a profound influence. It is from *Shahnama*'s Alexander narrative cycle that Nizami Ganjawi (d. ca. 1209) gives birth to the Iskandarnama genre in one of his quintet of *Khamsa*.[32] It is Nizami's desire for immortality (such as that granted to Firdawsi) that makes him seek out Khizr, who kisses Nizami in a dream and gives him the idea to write about Alexander. In Nizami's *Iskandarnama*, there exists the new capacity of Alexander to grow as an individual and to have a multifaceted character: a king, a conqueror, a mystic, a prophet. In Nizami, the idea (first extrapolated by Firdawsi) that there can be a pre-Islamic precedent to an Islamic ethos gains full currency. In Nizami, Alexander is fully articulated as a prophet on a righteous path, and his forays into governance or administration can then be seen as divinely sanctioned—no matter that this divinity predates the Prophet Muhammad. This view of Alexander is reproduced in Amir Khusraw Dehlavi's *A'ina-ye Iskandari* and later proliferations.

Chachnama's letters clearly offer political guidance akin to texts in the "Mirror for Princes" genre. Led by Julie Meisami, Stefan Leder, Dwight Reynolds, Brigette Gründler, and Dimitri Gutras, the scholarship on *adab* (right conduct, or advice) literature has focused on explicating the forms of genres and tracing the routes of transmission across Sanskrit, Greek, Arabic, and Persian texts.[33] The traced routes of development from the 'Abbasid courts of the ninth through tenth centuries and the emergence of Aristotelian thought and ethics in India after Nasir ud Din Tusi are also well studied. The key advice texts in this intellectual tradition are the *Siyasatnama* (Book of Politics) by Nizam Mulk (1018–1092), the *Qabusnama* (Book of Qabus) by Qabus ibn Vushmgir (d. 1012), and the *Rasa'il Ikhwan Safa'* (ca. tenth century).

What has received less scholarly attention is the configuration of the particular texts in this genre itself—that is, the making of this "canon" of political thought and the ways in which texts participated in it or were moved in and out of it. For instance, *Chachnama* as an example of *fathnama* or *maghazi* (conquest literature) has never been seen as relevant to the study of advice literature in India. This has profound consequences for the ways in which we trace the development of the "Mirror for Princes" or neo-Aristotelian thought in Muslim communities between the eighth and fourteenth centuries in India. While a constellation of advice texts such as Nasir Din Tusi's (1201–1274) *Akhlaq-i Nasiri* and Zia Din Barani's (ca. 1285–1356) *Fatawa-i Jahandari* and Amir Khusrau's *Tughluqnama* written in 1320, are present in any discussion on advice literature, scholarship is unclear on the processes by which such a constellation came into being and how the texts relate to each other.[34]

Scholarship on Persian texts focuses on these influences from earlier historiography within the genre of advice. Yet as Indic text of political theory, *Chachnama* also draws upon literary traditions that are normatively understood to be outside of particularly "Muslim" political theory. Those texts are the *Arthasastra* and the *Pancatantra*.[35] I offer a short reading of some motifs from *Chachnama* that invoke these Sanskrit texts to demonstrate the rich traditions that it draws upon. It is likely that the stories, motifs, and axioms from these second- or third-century texts found their way into *Chachnama* through oral traditions in Sind or through textual-commentary traditions. My effort to read *Chachnama* in light of these Sanskrit texts is not to argue for direct lineages but to highlight the interdependencies of political theory in the early thirteenth century across literary cultures.

Arthasastra is often understood as a text belonging to Kautilya, a minister for King Chandragupta Maurya (340–293 BCE).[36] In form and content, *Arthasastra* exemplifies the genre of "Mirror for Princes," wherein the ruling elite find advice for statecraft and governance in the form of political dicta. *Chachnama* invokes such dicta as well, linking itself to Indic political theory. Hajjaj's letter to Qasim, discussed previously, narrates the four ways in which a polity can be acquired: first through consultation, alliances, and treaties, and relation; second through expenditure of wealth and grants; third by knowing and understanding the ways and means of one's enemies; and fourth by dominance, terror, magnificence, bravery, power, and strength. The four ways in which a polity is acquired are referenced a number of times in *Chachnama* and are similar to *Arthasastra*'s repeated stress on the four methods of acquiring territory: *saman* (adopting a conciliatory attitude and making alliances), *dana* (showering with rewards and gifts), *bheda* (understanding and sowing dissension among enemies), and *danda* (using force).[37] Hajjaj's advice to make grants and coopt opposition mirrors that of *Arthasastra*, which renders the tasks in the same order: first to spend resources and attract political opponents, and to resort to violent conflict only if all else fails.

Chachnama also mirrors *Arthasastra*'s definition of the relationship between the king and his advisor: "a king can reign only with the help of others; one wheel alone does not move a chariot. Therefore, a king should appoint advisors and listen to their advice."[38] Hence, Chach with Budhiman, and Qasim with Hajjaj are presented as pairs in governance.

The spatial imagination in *Arthasastra* also resonates within *Chachnama*. *Arthasastra* describes the state in a relationship with its four borders and the kingdoms around it. It has an ideal variety of mountains, valleys, plains, deserts. This is precisely how *Chachnama* introduces Chach's kingdom. In both texts, the governed polity contains natural landscapes, and both texts emphasize promoting reserves for animals. They describe a built environment, with detailed descriptions of the physical layout of the capital, the forts, and the public buildings and outposts. Along with the spatial imagination, *Arthasastra* argues for political "stability" as a conquering king's key effort. This stability is operative in the territory of governance (*chakravartikshetram*). Hence, *Arthasastra* argues that political power should overcome political difference. As we saw in the letters, the capacity of the king to "visualize" the terrain is articulated and stressed throughout *Chachnama*.

How does *Chachnama* argue for a coherent political theory out of these various influences? Are its formulations moral edicts that can be separated from the text? Or is the effort instead to work through different perspectives with nested levels of comprehension throughout the text? It is this last question that emerges from my reading of the text. I am drawn to a similar reading advanced by Yigal Bronner in his review of the ninth-century Sanskrit text, *Kuttanimatam*, which was written in the court of the Kashmir king Jayapida.[39] Bronner explains that the text—a lecture by an older madam Vikarala to a young woman named Malati, delivered via a series of intricate framing stories—asks for deep meditation from the reader. There is often conflicting advice, or the sympathy of the text seems to be buried within the framing narratives, to characters who seemingly contradict the claims of genre and form. Imagined speakers provide a surface reading as well as a contradictory deeper reading that is revealed only through close attention to the text's acrobatics. I find Bronner's observations on how to read this ninth-century text particularly useful for *Chachnama*. As I have argued above, a whole-text reading of *Chachnama* allows us to see the ways in which the Chach narrative cycle and the Qasim narrative cycle dialogue with each other—how they present subtle variations or provide a foundation for political thought. Drawing on Bronner, I can make the further argument that one can conceive of *Chachnama* as consisting of various interlocked framing narratives, akin to the *Pancatantra* tales.

Pancatantra, composed in approximately 300 CE, articulates another example of the Indic advice genre, focusing on how to handle political life. *Pancatantra* fables feature nonhumans. They are animals and birds whose conduct is rooted in natural difference, yet who gather in conversation to govern, adjudicate, and seek redress. In form, *Pancatantra* addresses a far wider audience than *Arthasastra*, which restricts itself to the ruling elite. *Pancatantra*'s pedagogic effect relies upon the affect and the emotional resonances created in the listeners, and these tales went far afield as oral stories. The sources for some of these tales are the Buddhist Jataka tales. Others come from various *dharmasastra* texts such as *Mahabharata* and *Vikramacarita*, though they sometimes use aphorisms from *Arthasastra*. Unlike the *Arthasastra*, where the tone is factual, direct, and pragmatic, these tales are broadly conversational, with little direct explication of meaning, allowing for multiple interpretations in their readings. These short tales spread across Asia in as many guises and forms as any of us can possibly imagine, with recensions available to us from Tibet to Indonesia and in more than fifty languages.

I want to briefly sketch out the framing story and give an example of how *Pancatantra* invokes dialogue before I turn to ways in which we can conceive of its relationship to *Chachnama*. The brief framing story in *Pancatantra* is the plight of King Amarasakti, who has three foolish sons in need of training and education. He asks wise Brahmin Visnusarman to make the sons suitable for kingship. Visnusarman composes five books illustrating proper conduct (*niti*) or kingly conduct (*rajaniti*). The advice given in *Pancatantra* is multivocal and highly aware of difference as a categorical classification system. An illustration is an early and very popular tale, "Indigo Jackal" (story I–II), which recognizes that the capacity to harm is inimical to power:

> There was a certain jackal, Candarava by name, who lived in a jungle. Once, overcome by hunger, he entered a town and was attacked by dogs. He took shelter in a vat of indigo solution. When at last he managed to steal back to the jungle, he found that his body was colored a deep blue. Because of this blue color, the lion, tiger, wolf, and other denizens of the jungle did not recognize him as a jackal. They thought that he was a strange animal, and—being afraid—wanted to run away. For it is said, "The wise person who desires his own welfare does not trust someone whose behavior, family and prowess are unknown."
>
> But Candarava realized they were afraid of him and said: "O wild animals! Why do you flee in terror? I have been created by Indra to rule over the animals of the jungle, who have no ruler. Candarava is my name and you can all live in happiness under my rule." Having heard his words, the hosts of wild animals—lions, tigers, leopards, monkeys, hares, deer, jackals and the rest—bowed down to him and he made the lion his minister, the tiger his chamberlain, the leopard the keeper of his betel-box, the elephant his doorkeeper and the monkey his umbrella bearer. But those jackals who were his own kind were all expelled from the kingdom. And while he was thus enjoying the splendor of the kingdom, the lions and the rest, having killed wild animals, laid them down before him. And he, in accordance to *dharma*, distributed the flesh to them.
>
> While time passed in this way, one day in the assembly hall, having heard the chorus of voices of jackals howling in the vicinity, the hairs on his body stood, and he leapt up and howled with them. The lions and the rest, having heard this, realized that he was a jackal, bowed their heads in shame: "We have been deceived by a jackal, therefore let it be killed." Hearing that, he tried to flee, but was torn to pieces by the tiger and died.[40]

Two significant themes here are prevalent throughout *Pancatantra:* first the tension between the claim to kingship and the responsibility to the subjects for a just rule, and second the danger posed to kingship by treacherous and conniving forces. The latter make the former untenable. Hence, even though the jackal is a "just" king, his duplicity creates a fissure that cannot be overcome. This skeptical outlook on royal power, and the capacity of the courtiers to strike back, permeates the fables. Intertwined with that reading is the argument that the jackal is not suited for kingship because he *is* a jackal. This argument is developed in a series of other tales.

For example, in the framing story of the third book (3–01), birds—geese, cranes, cuckoos, peacocks, owls, pigeons, partridges, skylarks, etc.—come together to elect a king because Garuda the bird king is preoccupied and negligent in his duty to care for his subjects. The society of birds debates and decides to elect the owl, who has convinced them of his wisdom. However, just as they are about to crown him king, a crow interrupts the procession. The crow points out that the owl's nature is fierce, cruel, terrifying, and evil minded: he will be unable to protect his subjects. The collective of birds decides against electing the owl.[41] Similar to the story of the indigo jackal, the tale of the owl addresses the ruler's character, foregrounding the capacity of the ruled to counsel and to confederate to protect the greater good. This recognition of mutual difference between the ruler and the ruled and the incommensurability between the nature of one animal and that of another is demonstrated throughout *Pancatantra*. *Pancatantra*'s tales and its mode of advice may have entered *Chachnama* directly in Sind and Gujarat, or it could have come via translation from Arabic. ʿAwfi, for example, also translated Arabic advice literature into Persian.

The route for *Panctantra* through Arabic is better known but bears repetition here, for it solidifies our picture of a vibrant advice tradition. These tales, with their divergent meanings and gentle assertions of difference, first entered the Pahlavi Sassanian court of Khusru Anushirwan (d. 579) and then were transcreated into Arabic by Abdallah ibn Muqaffa in 750 CE as *Kalila wa Dimna*. Ibn Muqaffa' (d. ca. 756), translated the framing story of King Amrasakti to King Khusr and his philosopher physician Burzoy, who travels to India to acquire scientific knowledge and wisdom about governance. The tales concern the jackal Dimna, who is striving to acquire power by any means necessary, and his brother Kalila, who tries to dissuade him through moral teachings. The two are advisors to the king of the beasts—the lion—and they eventually are tried and executed after Kalila's scheme to become king fails. In *Kalila wa Dimna*, Muqaffa'—who wrote a series of other works on wisdom in Arabic, including *Adab al-Kabir* (The Comprehensive Book of the Rules of Conduct) and *A'in Nameh* (The Book of Proper Conduct)—created one of the most powerful and influential examples of advice literature in Arabic and Persian literary and political cultures. It spread widely through Islamic courts and was commented upon, reinscribed, and rewritten numerous times.

A prominent example of the development of *Kalila wa Dimna*'s stature as advice literature is in the *Rasa'il Ikhwan al-Safa'* (Brethren of Purity). In this text that was compiled in the late tenth century, the *jinn*, alongside animals and humans, enter into a ferocious debate about morality, ethics, faith, and governance. *Kalila wa Dimna* also influenced Persianate literary forms, from Firdawsi's *Shahnamah*, to Abu'l M'ati Nasru'llah's *Anvar-i Suhaili* (composed in 1121), and Fariduddin Attar's *Mantiq at-Tair* (Speech of the Birds), completed in 1178. These texts constituted a canon as foundational exegetical texts, addressing governance and royal conduct for the Persianate rulers of northern Indian from the twelfth century to the eighteenth. In these texts, difference is overwhelmingly understood through dialogue and refracted through pragmatic politics.

The *Chachnama*, and its audiences, would then be able to see resonances and lessons in the text. For they would see the connective tissues between this text and the fables, or the histories, or the advice literatures which are present in numerous forms in the literary elite circles of the thirteenth century. I conclude that there are modes of administrative, strategic, and political advice in *Chachnama* that draw upon diverse sources. The administrative mode is geared toward the understanding of political rule, the capacity to govern, and the ways in which alliances can be built, all of which constitute the text's theory of politics. The strategic mode is found in the explicit commands given through the minister or through Hajjaj, calibrating the hierarchy of how wisdom governs the polity. The political mode is the invocation of accommodation between differing communities through a process of dialogue and discussion.

Finally, there are small hints that also make possible a reading of *Chachnama* as an esoteric text that contains a *batani* (internal) meaning as is normative for Sufi mystical texts. I deliberately want to make a gesture toward such a reading, for there are clues provided of

Muhammad bin Qasim's piety in the text, which incorporate totemic usage of Qur'anic verses. The most heavily quoted verses of the Qur'an in the *Chachnama* are from *surah* 'Imran. This surah provides a legal basis for Muslim accommodation of other "People of the Book" (*Ahl al-Kitab*)—usually understood as Christians and Jews. There are other prayers, incantations, and recitations (*wazifa*) that can be read as either totemic or meditative. An example is when, after laying siege to the fort of Nirun, the Arab army cannot access water and is slowly running out of solutions. In despair, Muhammad bin Qasim petitions God, "O listener of woes and solver of hurdles, for the sake of *Bismillah al-Rahman ar-Rahim*, help us." Immediately, it starts raining.[42] Within Sufi discourse, *Bismillah al-Rahman ar-Rahim* is a phrase endowed with layers of spiritual meaning alongside its linguistic and textual referents. The presence of this and other recitations on the authority of the Qur'an adds to *Chachnama* a dimension upon which readers can meditate. The letters, filled as they are with stratagems and advice, are meant to be an aid for meditation and contemplation.

I have shown here that *Chachnama* uses the epistolary format to present advice for governance. That advice was curated from a variety of Persian, Arabic, and Sanskrit sources. Further, *Chachnama*'s mode of understanding is predicated on dialogical engagement. In the next chapter, I want to demonstrate how *Chachnama* emphasizes the mutual recognition of incommensurate difference as a basis of political power.

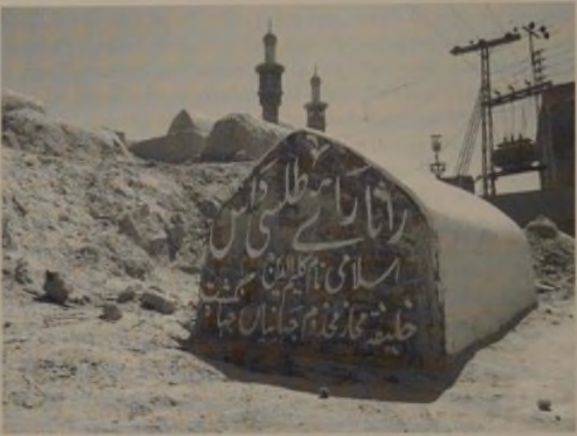
4

A Demon with Ruby Eyes

THE LANDSCAPE OF UCH is a sacral geography, with peaks and valleys that orient the visitor and the inhabitant to a hierarchy of shrines, graves, and mausoleums. In a city of graves, I thought best to commence with the graves themselves. The first grave I encountered was right outside the central shrine of the fourteenth-century Sufi Makhdum Jahaniyan Jahan Gasht. It belonged to Rana Rai Tulsi Das, a local noble who converted to Islam through the efforts of this Sufi, hence, was buried near him. This politically important medieval conversion is noted on the grave: "Rana Rai Tulsi Das. Islamic name Kalimuddin."

There were no flowers on his grave. Nor were any devotees praying next to it, though it was visibly marked and was next to the shrine. I asked a number of people if any stories were connected to the grave, but no one knew any. They did recognize Rana Rai as having been important, however. Can we take inscription of the Hindu and the Muslim name on the grave as a demonstration of the Sufi's power to convert?[1] The logic of conversion would mean that his Hindu name had no significance. So why inscribe it? I suggest that we read this inscription as notating a social cohabitation of two religious communities in fourteenth-century Uch and as recognition of the social power of Hindus in the region.[2]

In the low, sandy terrain at the outer edges of Uch, I came across several other graves of Hindus, less prominent and much closer to the



Grave of Raī Tulsi Das. (Photo © Manan Ahmed Asif.)

present.[3] These were material homes for bodies belonging to Hindus of the present Uch and surrounding villages. There are other such material echoes of Hindu past and present in Uch. At the arch above the old market, I saw the inscription "Koncha Temple Doorway" (*Koncha Mandar Darwaza*). Walking under the arch and down the pathway, I asked a number of shopkeepers if they knew about the temple. Everyone claimed they had never heard of a temple—many were even incredulous that I was asking about a temple. Yet as I kept walking into the old neighborhood, I spotted in the fading light the telltale spire of a temple rising above the walled gate.

Arriving at the temple structure, I knocked on the door. A twelve-year-old boy answered and explained that this house belonged to his father, who also had a home in Karachi. The father was at home, so I was able to ask him about the arch. He said that yes, his home had been the temple. In the years since the Partition of 1947, scores of Hindu families had left Uch, driven out by fear or by fiat. The family who had lived in the temple had been there since the early 1980s, when the father

A Hindu grave. (Photo © Manan Ahmed Asif.)

annexed the caretaker's house. He had not, however, been able to get legal ownership, and this is why he could not tear down the temple and rebuild it. There were stories that demons haunted the temple, and any attempt to discuss the demolition of it would result in vehicular accidents, broken businesses, and marital discord. Therefore, they had left the temple architecture untouched—their silent roommate.

The material remains of Hindus in Uch must be sought out. To see them is to be willing to reexamine the colonial narrative that sees

Uch as representative of a despotic Islam that conquered, forcibly converted, and then systematically erased the Hindu past. The visible-invisible graves and the visible-invisible temple represent the stark reality of this erasure in Uch. My assertion to my hosts and friends in this city that has hosted non-Muslims for the majority of its extended history elicited neither disdain nor disbelief. They do not identify Hindus as Pakistani. Hindus are unseen even when their material remains are visible in the landscape, and their histories are forgotten even though they form the past.[4]

The grave of the convert Tulsi Das asks us to think about the history of religious and political difference in medieval Uch. Throughout the medieval period, Uch and Multan were central pilgrimage sites for Vishnavite and Surya devotees, and their admixture with Isma'ili tradition created the Satpanth tradition. From the beginning of the tenth century, the sacral geography of Uch consisted of the landscape of Vedas intersected with Shi'a and Sunni polities. Built on the same temple pilgrim network in Uch, the new Sufi networks linked Iraq, Iran, and India from the twelfth century onward. Specific pilgrim groups included the Suhrawardi (founded by Shaykh Najib al-Din Suhrawardi, d. 1149) and the Qadiriya (founded by Shaykh `Abd ul-Qadir Jilani, d. 1165).

This chapter explores the political theory of understanding difference presented in *Chachnama*. Early-thirteenth-century Sind was not only a world of acute claims to power and territory by multiple warlords, it was also a world of sacral difference among the elite as well the populace. As a text of political theory, *Chachnama* sought to address this central concern by considering the question of religious difference, cohabitation, and political organization in Sind. I show that *Chachnama* focused on the recognition of diverse sacrality, the quest for accommodation of different communities, and politics' role in governing difference.

In Chapter 3, we saw how *Chachnama* makes an argument for foregrounding the role of advisors and of advice, emphasizes the dialogic process by framing it in epistolary exchanges, and asks the reader to ruminate on multiple meanings in the text. In revisiting the question of difference in the medieval Muslim past, I seek to counter arguments that tie mass conversion to conquest. (These arguments have shaped scholarship on medieval religious encounters in South Asia.[5]) I argue that *Chachnama* produces a rich understanding of religious difference—a theory of recognition of the sacral power of the different communities and the necessity for accommodation and alliance among them. We know that the political world of Qabacha's Uch was heterodox and polyglot. *Chachnama* informs us of some of the political theory that made this possible.

In the first part of this chapter, I do a close reading of *Chachnama* to demonstrate how it argues for the recognition and incorporation of difference to create political order. I examine the motif of ruby eyes in *Chachnama* and then provide a genealogy of this motif through Muslim accounts of Sind to demonstrate the ways in which its appearance in narratives denotes the contours of Hindu-Muslim encounters. In the second part of the chapter, I turn toward the making of the Muslim polity in *Chachnama*—the usage of law and existing social practices as tools for governing a diverse polity.

Encounters with Difference

The first delineation of a political theory of difference and power is narrated by `Ali Kufi in the section pertaining to Sind before the arrival of Islam—during the reign of Chach. The Brahmin Chach is attempting to conquer the various principalities in Sind and unite them under his rule. He faces resistance at the fort city of Brahmanabad and lays siege to it. But Chach faces an antagonistic population that is largely Buddhist. The inhabitants have paid tribute to the central Buddhist temple as well as a recalcitrant ruler, Agham. The priest of the temple reads the stars and discovers that the fort will fall to Chach but that the priest will remain safe from Chach's wrath. So the priest encourages the ruler Agham to resist Chach for a year. Chach hears that the head priest of the Buddhist temple has magic and cunning (*sahar o talbis o jadu o tadbir*) that are strong enough to repel all invaders and that it is due to his efforts that Chach's campaign to conquer the fort has taken a year. Chach vows to "peel off the skin" of the priest and "give it to the royal drummers so that they can stretch it across their drums and beat it to shreds" to punish him for the resistance.[6] Hearing of this, the priest laughs and says, "Chach does not have the power to hurt me." After a violent struggle in which many are killed, the city surrenders to Chach and begs him for amnesty. With the help of mediators who "belonged to learned classes," Chach grants amnesty to all, entering into marriage alliances and fixing taxation. After a year of settling the affairs of the new state, he turns his attention to the priest who defied him:

> [Chach] asked, "Where is that magician Buddhist (*samani*) so that I can see him?" They said, "He is an ascetic (*nasik*) and will be with the ascetics. He is one of the wise ones of al-Hind and a servant of the temple (*kanohar*). They praise his miracles and his spiritual gain. He is so powerful that he has ensnared the whole world in his spell and those that he supports succeed."[7]

Even though Chach has gained political control over Brahmanabad, he is determined to counter the powerful claims of this priest and his support for the previous king. Chach takes a large retinue and sets off to find and kill the priest. He orders his troops to stop at a distance from the temple, and he proceeds alone. He instructs them that after he is done conversing with the priest, he will give them a signal, and at that moment, they are to descend upon the priest and cut off his head. At the temple, Chach finds the priest sitting alone on the ground, making little clay idols (*asnam*) with his hands and marking them with a seal. The priest ignores Chach for a while and then finally addresses him: "So the son of Sila'ij the priest has arrived?"

Chach replies, "Yes, O Ascetic."

"Why have you come?"

"I am your disciple, and I have come to pay my respects."[8]

The priest asks Chach to sit and inquires about him. Chach says that he wants the priest to return to the court in Brahmanabad and resume religious duties so that the people can continue their traditional ways. The health of the polity, Chach says, depends on the continuation of what has been, rather than on new regimes of power. The priest listens carefully and replies that he feels no need to take part in political matters, and he is content to stay in his temple. This prompts Chach to ask,

> "So why did you resist me in taking Brahmanabad?" The priest replied, "When the ruler Agham had passed away and the young prince became the raja, I reluctantly took the task of giving him advice. Though in my view, all matters of this world are to be shunned. Now that you are the ruler of the world, I am willing to obey you, but I fear that you will take your revenge on the temple and destroy it. Chach answered, "It is always better to be praising the Buddha and to attain perfection in his path. If you need anything from me, you simply ask."[9]

Then Chach offers riches for the priest's temple, but his generosity is repeatedly declined. In the end, the priest makes one request: "The Buddhist temple of Kanohar is ancient and decrepit. If you repair it, you will earn the gratitude of the believers."[10] Chach quickly agrees to have the temple rebuilt and leaves the priest. He returns to his troops and orders them back to Brahmanabad. "Why did you not let us kill the priest?" inquires Chach's minister, while leaving. Chach replies:

> I saw something that was neither trickery nor magic. I examined it carefully with my eyes. When I sat down next to him, I saw a demon, ugly and fearful (*makruh o sahamnak*), who stood next to him. His eyes were like embers glowing, or rubies; his lips were fat and drooping; his teeth were sharp like spears. And he looked to strike someone. I was frightened when I saw him, and I dared not speak to the priest as I had indicated to you, because I knew he would kill me. So I made peace with him and left.[11]

This encounter between the Hindu King Chach and the Buddhist temple priest is the first of numerous encounters between different religious communities in *Chachnama*. It offers three models for recognizing and ordering difference: a hierarchical distinction between the ruler and the ruled, a distinction that acknowledges the faith of the individual, and a distinction between serving the state and serving god. The people of Brahmanabad resist their conquest but are pardoned afterward through mediation. The faith and temple of the city are protected, and Chach proclaims that serving Buddha is a valuable pursuit.

Though there are different ways of sacrality (ascetic or institutional), they are presented as overlapping, which allows for alliances of law, conduct, and marriage. The standoff between the political power of the ruler, as represented by Chach, and the sacral power of the priest, as represented by the (invisible to others) demon with ruby eyes, similarly rests on mutually understanding religious difference within a shared conceptual universe. Chach recognizes the spiritual and political power of the Buddhist priest. For Chach, the reason for compromise is both an understanding of religious efficacy in political life as well as a grasp of religious-political intersections of power. In recognizing the Buddhist temple and fearing the Buddhist demon, the Brahmin Chach agrees to a political understanding of difference. In recognizing the political power of Chach and asking him for material aid, the Buddhist priest also agrees to this understanding of sacral difference.

Within the political theory of *Chachnama*, this account is an argument for mutual comprehension of difference. The communities are made commensurable through the way Chach recognizes the sacral power of the demon with ruby eyes and allows the Buddhist priest to maintain his social status. The priest, in turn, recognizes Chach's recently acquired political power. The ruby eyes signify an agreement between sacral and political power. They narratively mark a process of *translation* across sacral and political regimes. *Chachnama* is drawing upon a long genealogy of representations of Indic deities in Muslim sources. *Chachnama* takes this potent symbolic representation of Hindu presence and deploys it narratively as a site of translation between Hindu and Muslim political and sacral powers.

Let us examine a textual genealogy of this archetype in Muslim writings on India to demonstrate the concept in *Chachnama*. An idol with ruby eyes first makes an appearance in Baladhuri's ninth-century conquest text, marking a frontier and an encounter of difference. Baladhuri narrates it in his description of the Muslim campaign in the region of Dawar (in Oruzgan province in central Afghanistan, north of Kandahar) in 634–635 CE:

> When ['Abd Shams] reached the land of Dawar, he surrounded [the people] in the mountain of Zur. They appealed for peace. He had with him 8,000 Muslims, and each of them received 4,000 dirhams [for tribute]. Ibn Samrah entered the Zurand temple and saw an idol of gold with ruby eyes ['*ainah yaqutan*]. He cut off the hand of the idol and took out the rubies. Then he called out to the caretaker: "Keep

> the gold and the rubies. I only wanted to show that it has no power to help or harm." He then conquered Bust and Zabul by covenant.[12]

This early account from Baladhuri presents three motifs that come to dominate later Muslim accounts of Hindu-Muslim encounters in the temple: the gold-filled house of the idol, the idol with human form and ruby eyes, and the caretaker who acts as the mediator or interlocutor. Here, removing of the eyes shows the incapacity of the idol to see, and the Arab account notes that the caretaker *recognizes* the hierarchy of power. For Baladhuri, the account asserts dominance, in line with the concerns of the *fathnama* genre.

The idol with ruby eyes appears again in geographic narratives on Sind. The location of the idol and the description of the temple and the riches differ, and one further difference is striking: The idol is left unmolested and is made to represent the political coexistence of Muslims in India. In line with the concerns we saw in Chapter 3, in the early tenth century, Istakhri moves the motif of the ruby eyes to the idol in Multan and highlights the marvel of wealth:

> He has the form of a man, fourfold, and he sits on a throne of stucco and bricks. He is covered with a skin which looks like red Saffiano leather, so that nothing is visible of his body except for his two eyes. Some people maintain that his body is made of wood, and others reject that, but no part of his body is uncovered. His eyes are of precious rubies. On his head he wears a fourfold diadem of gold. In this way he sits on the throne, holding his forearms stretched out over his knees, spreading his fingers like someone indicating the number four in counting.[13]

Istakhri focuses on the richness of the temple and on the presence of pilgrims and their material donations to the temple. Ibn Hawqal, another Arab geographer who visited Multan, repeats this account. He also includes the details that pilgrims pay tribute to the idol and that Isma'ili rulers of Multan protect the temple and the idol. The presence of this account in the Arab geographical narratives, as discussed earlier, proposes that the frontier of Sind was a negotiated space where Islam was in political dialogue with neighboring Hindu polities.

A different treatment of the idol with ruby eyes is given by Abu Rayhan Biruni (d. 1048), who visits Multan in the early eleventh century. As part of Mahmud Ghazni's armed assault on the Isma'ili city states, Biruni makes a point to showcase how the Isma'ili rulers have disrespected and destroyed the powerful temple and its potent idol:

> A renowned idol is one of Surya [the sun] in Multan, and it was named Adat. It was made of wood, and the red hide of goat was wrapped around it. In its eyes were two rubies. The Hindus say that it was made in the previous age (*yug*). If we suppose it was made at the end of this age, it would be 216,432 years old. When Muhammad bin Qasim conquered Multan and collected all the wealth of the city and reflected on how it came to be amassed there, he decided that the idol was the cause of it. Pilgrims came from everywhere to visit it.
>
> Muhammad bin Qasim did not disturb the idol but hung cow's meat around the neck as a sign of disrespect and built a mosque there. Then the Qaramita [Shi'a] took Multan. Jalm ibn Shayban who conquered Multan, broke the idol and killed the caretakers and built his own home where the Umayyad mosque stood. When Amir Mahmud [Ghazni] relieved the city from the Qaramita, he reconstructed the first mosque and closed the other one and let the henna plants grow there.
>
> Now if we subtract from 216,432 the period between the Qaramita and us, that is around one hundred years, and if we subtract the period from the beginning of the Hijra, then there remain 216,000. How this wood remained [unchanged] in the environment of this place for so long, only God knows.[14]

The politics of domination are narrated through the idol. Biruni's main objective is to historicize the depravity of the Shi'a political regime. Mahmud Ghazni, Biruni argues, is the one to correct the mistakes of the past. In Biruni's narrative, Muhammad bin Qasim first asserts the superiority of Islam over the polytheists by committing a taboo (killing a cow) and publicly soiling the idol (giving the cow meat as an offering). Yet Qasim recognizes the material (and political) benefits of polytheism and allows the temple to continue as a place of worship. This policy of limited accommodation mirrors how scholars have begun to understand Mahmud's own policies toward Hindu subjects and polities.[15]

Biruni's chief concern is to mark Qaramita transgression—they are the ones who abandoned the policy of accommodation, they are the ones who destroyed the ruby-eyed idol and the temple, and they are the ones who built a palace on the temple's space. He is arguing that the Qaramita Shi'a are the truest danger for Islam and that Mahmud rescues the Muslim past and Indic present from them. Mahmud "relieves" the city from that heresy, he rebuilds the mosque of Muhammad bin Qasim, but he leaves the other temple as a ruin.

It is clear that the idol with ruby eyes is narratively important in the representation of difference between Hindu and Muslim communities in Sind's frontier. In Baladhuri, the motif was employed to show the lack of power in Hindu faith. In the Arab geographer accounts, it represented the wealth and prosperity of Indic polities and the political alliances between Muslim rulers and Hindu subjects. In Biruni, it demonstrated Muslim sectarian conflict and its repercussions for Hindu subjects.

In *Chachnama*, the first encounter with an idol occurs when Qasim is attempting to take the fort of Aror and faces staunch resistance from the people—echoing Chach's conquest of Brahmanabad. After a long siege, the city surrenders and opens the gates to the fort only after Qasim promises the people's safety. *Chachnama* narrates:

> Then, as Muhammad bin Qasim entered the fort, he heard that all the inhabitants were gathered at the temple of Naubahar (*nava-vihar*), praying. Muhammad bin Qasim asked, "Whose home is this, that everyone is attending it and praying there?" They replied, "This is the temple Naubahar." Then he entered it and saw a figure (*surati*) sitting on a horse. On its hands were bracelets of gold and rubies. Muhammad bin Qasim reached out and with his hand took the bracelet from the idol. Then he called the caretaker priest and said, "Is this your idol?" He replied, "Yes. But he had two bracelets and now has only one." Muhammad bin Qasim said, "Why does your god not know that his bracelet is gone?" The priest bowed his head, and Muhammad bin Qasim smiled and returned the bracelet.[16]

The violence done to the idol in Baladhuri does not recur in this episode, yet the account of Qasim clearly recasts that narrative with important emendations. *Chachnama* remarks on the significance of the temple's sacrality, thus arguing for the relationship between sacral and political spaces. Important for the argument here, the caretaker recognizes Qasim's pointed declaration against the Hindu deity. Qasim does not molest the idol but smiles knowingly. The taking and return of the bracelet asserts the dominance of Islam, and the speechless priest bears witness of this dominance. Qasim returns the bracelet and leaves without conflict.

However, Qasim's the next encounter with an idol elicits a different emotional response from him. He is frightened when he enters the temple in Multan:

> Muhammad bin Qasim entered that temple with his advisors and his nobles. He saw a gold idol with two bright ruby eyes, glowing red. Muhammad bin Qasim thought that this was a man. He unsheathed his sword to strike the idol, but the Brahmin caretaker exclaimed, "Oh just Commander! This is an idol (*but*) that the king of Multan, Juban, created and under which they sequestered riches and treasures." Then Muhammad bin Qasim commanded to have the idol lifted.[17]

Qasim's reaction of fear before the ruby eyes links this episode to that of the frightening demon confronted by Chach. The Brahmin Chach had been scared and changed his mind from killing the Buddhist priest to rebuilding the temple. The Muslim Qasim is scared enough to consider striking the idol but does not. Like Chach agreeing to rebuild the Buddhist temple, Qasim, under the advisement of the caretaker, commits to the public good by protecting the idol and the temple: "Then he gathered the noble and the public of Multan and entered into a pact with them, safeguarded the idol, built a central mosque, and appointed as the city's commander Daud bin Nasr bin Walid ʿUmani."[18] Key here is that the caretaker is an explainer of the past as well as the source of the information about the wealth in the temple. It is he who asks Qasim to be cautious and not act in fear. His translation of the sacral power of the idol, as well as its political role, is what allows Qasim to recognize the significance of the temple and to create a just political order for the city that is based in the politics of accommodation. Just as there is a recognition of spiritual and political power within the Buddhist-Brahmin encounter in the Chach cycle, so is there an accommodation based on the effective role of the population in the

Muslim-Brahmin encounter in the Qasim cycle. The red eyes put into conceptual conversation the creedal and political powers inhabiting the region in the thirteenth century. They serve as a motif for the work of translation that the non-Muslims do for political power and the crucial role of mediation for governance.

Chachnama is redeploying a reoccurring symbol from Muslim texts to offer strategies for governance: first to recognize the incommensurability of religions and make that recognition a tool for mutual alliance, and second to incorporate the idea of a public good in the managing of difference. While this allows a glimpse at the theoretical apparatus underpinning the encounter between communities in the thirteenth century, *Chachnama* further provides illustrations of how alliance building and negotiation are needed for the essential task of managing difference.

Such a reading of *Chachnama* has remained occluded by scholarship's reading of the text as an account of the eighth century. As an origins narrative, *Chachnama* functions in two synced ways: it details the military conquest of space, and it shows the sacral conquest of the inhabitants of Sind. In the next section, I read *Chachnama* for its understanding of sacral cohabitation and conversion.

The Question of Conversion

More than a thousand miles southwest of Uch, and nearly 150 miles west of Karachi, at the coastline of Makran, lies Hingol National Park. It is the largest federally protected natural reserve in Pakistan, and its flat, barren space is littered with seemingly extraterrestrial rock formations. Here still exist rock temples to Shiva and Durga Mata.[19] Here are nine-feet-long graves of holy warriors who carved a stone formation for Kalka Devi. Here is a mosque founded by Muhammad bin Qasim. Here are also "Tombs of Soldiers of Muhammad bin Qasim," as the road sign proclaims.

The tombs are scattered throughout coastal Makran and Sind and have little to do with Qasim's exploits. However, their unique structure, elaborate carvings, and unusual orientation does lend them a peculiar aura. The inscriptions on the tombs are deteriorated, but studies by Khurshid Hasan date them to the mid-eighteenth century.[20] A

Purported graves of Arab soldiers who came to Sind with Muhammad bin Qasim. (Photo courtesy of Ahsan Shah, 2015.)

number of the tombs belong to prominent women from the region's Baluchi political elite. Their funerary inscriptions point to their enslaved beginnings: "Bibi slave-girl was set free from this bondage so as to benefit on the day of judgment," and "Baggo son of Sulyman Kalmati appeared on the day before the grave of Bafat Naghmah, the slave-girl and other slaves, freed for the sake of Allah and the Prophet of Allah."[21] These inscriptions, orient us toward an circulation of converted slaves who inhabited this landscape. Inscribed in stone are notions of servitude (*bandagi*) intertwined with a historical memory of prominent women.[22]

As a political theory of governance over a diverse polity in thirteenth-century Uch, *Chachnama* can be read as a source for understanding the politics governing conversion to Islam in medieval South Asia. It is important to examine the question of conversion because the colonial origins narrative casts Islam's arrival as a moment of erasure of the prior political and sacral practices. In later scholarship that understood *Chachnama* as an eighth-century text, *Chachnama* largely became a source for issues concerning conversion or legal treatment of non-Muslims. Citing *Chachnama*, S. A. A. Rizvi noted that "conversion to Islam by political pressure began with the conquest of Sind and Multan by Muhammad bin Qasim," who was "successful in persuading the Sind chieftains to embrace Islam."[23] In contrast, in his major study of conversion under early Islam based on *Chachnama*, Derryl Maclean argued that the earliest Muslim conquest did not pressure the Buddhists or Śaivite community in Sind to convert.[24] Such formulation remains the predominant understanding of how to read *Chachnama* for the process of conversion in India after Islam's arrival. However, I argue that we need to examine *Chachnama* for the ways in which it, itself, understands this history of conversion, of coexistence, and of political rule and accommodation in the thirteenth century. In fact, *Chachnama* offers only a single treatment of conversion and is otherwise unconcerned with it.

It is significant that there is only one direct narrative of conversion in *Chachnama*. It is a narrative of a single conversion, not a mass conversion. In Chapter 3, I presented a debate between Muhammad bin Qasim and his patron, Hajjaj, on the question of conversion. Hajjaj guides Qasim to allow freedom for different sacral practices and to focus only on the rival king and his submission to Qasim's political power. This makes a reading of the only conversion narrated in *Chachnama* significant as an assertion of political power. In this episode of conversion, the emissaries sent by Qasim to Dahar include a Syrian noble and a slave from Daybul (*moulai Debali*) who "had embraced Islam on the hands of Muhammad bin Qasim."[25] When the emissaries reach Dahar, the convert now written as "owned by Islam" (*moulai Islam*), refuses to give Dahar the greeting customary for a slave toward his master. Dahar chides him for not acting according to the "law of the land," to which he replies: "When I was a subject of your law, I fulfilled the conditions of my slavery. Now that I am acquainted with the fruits of Islam and my relationship is with the King of Islam, I am no longer liable for bowing my head to an unbeliever."[26]

The framing of this conversion as a question of political subjecthood demonstrates the ethics of the *Chachnama*, where sacral practices are tied explicitly to the political and to a just order. At no other point does *Chachnama* narrate the making of new Muslims. What it does focus heavily on is making *subjects* of non-Muslim populations who remain non-Muslim. Notably in this episode of conversion, *Chachnama* remarks on the law of the land and what that law allows a subject to do. It does not remark on the sacral domination of a particular faith. Like its treatment of political accommodation of diverse communities, *Chachnama* portrays conversion as a political translation between regimes of power.

The appointment of Hindu nobility and advisors to key positions in the Muslim army demonstrates that for *Chachnama*'s political theory, the religion of individual subjects is of little or no importance. When Qasim appoints Kiksa, the minister of the fallen Dahar, to the position of the chief treasurer for the Muslim army, he gives him full power to create pacts and alliances. Qasim recognizes Kiksa as "a wise man of Hind" (*hakim-i Hind*) when he approaches Qasim with the couplet, "advice should come only from the experienced, the intelligent, the ones with foresight / those for whom there is a distinction between the inner and the outer."[27] Qasim calls him an "advisor who brings good fortune" (*mubarak mushir*). There is no sign that Kiksa's advice is tied to his conversion for this important post in the Muslim army—a clear indication that the sectarian difference does not cause any particular anxiety for the text and its milieu. *Chachnama* recognizes numerous other Brahmin or Buddhist advisors and allies who are incorporated in the task of conquest or governance. In essence then, *Chachnama* articulates the importance of a political will that foregrounds an ethics of difference where governance (the rulers' relationship with the mercantile, agrarian, and artisanal community) and public good (the maintenance of temples in the city) are paramount.

Chachnama first uses Buddhist-Hindu religious difference and political accommodation as the model for its political theory of difference. *Chachnama* presents a past in which the Brahmin Chach and the Buddhist polities and priests are intertwined. Buddhist-Brahmin encounters in *Chachnama* provide a model for how a Muslim polity should encounter other faiths. In the Chach cycle, there are three models of conquest of Buddhist sites: when Chach captures the fort of Sika, he kills the five thousand warriors in the city, enslaves the population, and appoints a foreign governor over them; when Chach engages the fort in Sistan, the king surrenders and asks for a treaty, so Chach imposes a tax (*mal*) on the community; finally, when Chach takes Brahmanabad, he grants amnesty to the inhabitants, protects them with a treaty, and imposes no taxation.

These treatments involve the making of alliances and the capacity of civilian populations to negotiate independently with the conqueror. The populations' capacity to enter into new agreements with rulers and their ethical claim on governors are highlighted repeatedly in *Chachnama*. In these cases, *Chachnama* makes explicit that the goal of the king is always to protect the general population.[28] In the Qasim cycle, we see how the narrative repeats the model of Chach and how Qasim implements a Muslim polity in the same fort of Brahmanabad:

> The governor of the Summa Sandvi Amir Muhammad reports that when Muhammad bin Qasim approached the environs of Brahmanabad, he camped at a site known as Manhal, which is lake of bountiful vegetation and birds. The people who live there are Buddhist merchants. They appealed to him for alliance, and he gave them all peace and proclaimed, "Stay in your country (*watan*) in peace and prosperity, and deliver your tax (*mal*) to the treasury on time. Then after deciding on their tax, he appointed two men from among them as their administrators."[29]

On approaching Brahmanabad, Qasim recognizes the social class and occupation (merchants) of the people and grants them protection. He also appoints their own elite as governors. When Qasim reports Brahmanabad's resolution to his superior, Hajjaj accepts it and issues an official policy for broader Muslim governance over the region. Hajjaj grants peace and "very light" taxation on "artisans and merchants," and he protects and releases from taxation those who work in the field or who build. There is no call for mass conversion, but Hajjaj limits the tax collected from those who convert to Islam. Lastly, he orders that those who are under an existing legal structure be accommodated: "Whoever stays on his own law (*bar kish-i khud*), require from his work the tax as designated for the administration."[30] Hajjaj gives the highest regard to those who contribute to the prosperity of the land through their work.

After the declaration by Qasim, the Buddhist subjects near Brahmanabad begin celebrating with "dancing and singing with drums and does focus heavily on is making *subjects* of non-Muslim populations who remain non-Muslim. Notably in this episode of conversion, *Chachnama* remarks on the law of the land and what that law allows a subject to do. It does not remark on the sacral domination of a particular faith. Like its treatment of political accommodation of diverse communities, *Chachnama* portrays conversion as a political translation between regimes of power.

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After the declaration by Qasim, the Buddhist subjects near Brahmanabad begin celebrating with "dancing and singing with drums and trumpet." Again, Qasim sanctions their cultural practice and orders them to continue their livelihood as earlier.[31]

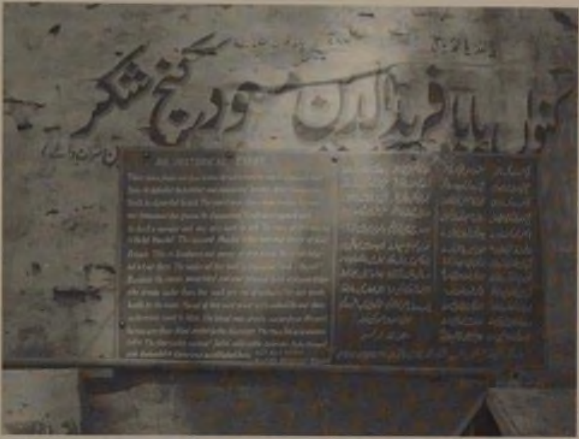
By invoking the Buddhists, *Chachnama* provides policies for governing a class of people (merchants, farmers, artisans), giving them representation under political rule, and accepting their customary practices as beneficial for governance. Similar encounters, with other communities in Sind, occur at numerous junctures such that one can generalize these edicts to all civilian populations. That non-Muslims can be brought under Muslim rule without strife and with full accommodation under Islamic law.

Soon after Brahmanabad, Qasim lays siege to the fort of Aror, and the merchants, artisans, and laborers send him a message: "We renege on our treaty with Brahmin Dahar because he is dead and his son has also abandoned us, . . . so we appeal to your service, that if you treat us with just and righteous conduct (*`adal o insaf*), we will accept your command and trust you with the fort."[32] This is a declaration of political allegiance based on the mutually comprehensible idea of justice and loyalty. The merchants, artisans, and laborers insist on the ruler behaving ethically and accommodating the transfer of alliances. The ruler is in a dialogic relationship with the subjects. In this political theory, the ruler must enter the contract and keep its terms.

Chachnama argues that recognizing forms of difference and translating them into politically viable structures allows for communities to coexist. *Chachnama*'s theory of making difference commensurable and citing precedents is remarkable from a text that is understood as a conquest narrative. Scholarship continues to approach the medieval Indic pasts through the lens of converted space—from Hindu to Muslim.

To avoid the risk that my reading of *Chachnama* might be considered exceptional in the broader history of northern India, I want to further reflect on this question of conversion for Sind. This time I will approach it through a reading of sacral space in Uch's material landscape and a sixteenth-century Sufi text. There we will see modes of accommodation and equivalence between sacral traditions, as we have seen in *Chachnama*.

Active in contemporary cultural memory in Uch is the account from *Chachnama* of Qasim digging a well and founding a mosque in



The well of Baba Farid. (Photo © Manan Ahmed Asif.)

Uch. Both the mosque and the well are pilgrimage sites, whitewashed and adorned with flowers and incense. The well is on the right, facing the threshold of the prayer room in a small courtyard. On the left is the tree that Qasim planted. The well is covered in glazed tiles and a small fence. Often there is someone standing nearby, offering a prayer. This, however, is named the Well of Baba Farid because the Sufi Fariduddin Ganj-i Shakr (d. 1265)—remembered as Baba Farid—spent forty days (or six months or ten years) suspended upside down in this well in meditation.[33] Baba Farid's meditation resacralized Uch's imprint on the landscape of contemporary Muslim imagination by connecting two histories of arrivals—that of Qasim's military campaign and that of the spiritual campaigns of Chishti Sufis. I visited the well to see for myself how the history of Islam's arrival is tied to Uch's material landscape. On the wall above the well, a green sign informs the reader about the history of this location. In English prose (with Urdu verse), it reads as follows:

> There came a famous man from Arabia. He was seventeen years of age at that time. He defeated Raja Dahar and conquered Daybul. After conquering Sind, he departed to Uch. The young man came from Arabia; his name was Muhammad Bin Qasim. He conquered Sind and reached Uch. He built a mosque and dug up a well in Uch. The name of this mosque is "Mosque of Wants." This ancient mosque is also the place of worship for the "four friends." This is due to kindness and mercy of Qasim. This is not false but a true story. The water of this well is likewise "Water of Life" because the saints meditated and prayed here. A gloomy fellow who drinks water from this well gets rid of sadness.

The archives of cultural memory are critical to unravel. I listened to contemporary accounts of a thirteenth-century Sufi immersed in a yogic practice crucial to his divination, at a location that is said to connect him to the eighth century. The simultaneous imagining of asynchronous pasts with synchronous practices is a regular feature of stories in Uch. When I inquired how Baba Farid was able to feed himself while in meditation, I was repeatedly told that he was fed by Rai Bhag Mal, a Hindu merchant from the town. When Baba Farid emerged from the well, he blessed the merchant and accepted him as a disciple, without asking him to convert. It is for this reason, it was explained to me, that Hindus of Sind and Gujarat continue to venerate Baba Farid and visit his shrine in nearby Pakpattan.[34]

For the people in Uch the placard and the memory of Qasim represent an encounter with difference and its resolution. The popular accounts of Baba Farid relate that after leaving the well, he embarked on a mission to convert the region of Pakpattan to Islam. His conversion stories feature miracles, acts of kindness, and divine aid. These stories are often heard at gatherings in Sufi shrines at Uch. At first hearing, they sound triumphalist and evocative of Islam's victory over the region. Yet like the story of the Rai Tulsi Das, there are nuances embedded in the tellings. The stories are collected in various hagiographies, such as the *Siyar al-Aqtab*, compiled in 1646 by Shaykh Alhadiya Chishti 'Usmani. An examination of the structure of an archetypal encounter would help situate the mental mapping of difference in medieval Uch. The following account is one I heard in Uch and it concerns Baba Farid moving from Uch to Pakpattan (Ajodhan) and settling there:

> It is narrated that when Baba Farid reached Ajodhan, he rested and meditated under a tree along with his companions. One day, he caught sight of a woman with a jug of milk on her head walking by. He asked, "O Mother, what is in that jug and where do you take it?" When she heard him, she came to him and spoke, "O friend of God, there is a yogi who has the people of this village under his magic (*sahr*) spell and demands milk from everyone every day. If anyone fails to deliver, then his cow falls ill and dies, and all the milk turns to blood. Do not delay me, or this calamity will be mine." The shaykh consoled the woman and said, "Sit and let these ascetics (*fakir*) drink from your jug." She sat and complied.
>
> Shortly after, a disciple of the yogi walked by and, seeing the woman sitting with the Sufi, began to curse at her. The shaykh said, "Silence, O fool! Sit quietly!" And his tongue was stricken and his feet were tied and he sat immobile. At last that magician yogi himself appeared and when he saw that his disciple was bound, he grew enraged, and tried to counter the shaykh with his magic. However, as soon as he tried to utter the spell, his memory could not conjure it. Thus he understood that in front of a mountain and a river, the stone and the droplet have no agency and no will. Bereft, he begged the shaykh for mercy for his disciple. The shaykh replied, "I will release your disciple on the condition that you gather all your disciples and all of your possessions and vacate this village, even this region. Take your unpunished sins along with you." The yogi replied, "Can I retire to my house with my disciples?" The shakyh said, "No. You must depart." Having no choice the yogi left, and with his leaving, unbelief and tyranny left, and the city was gripped with order. After a few days, the shaykh left the tree and visited the yogi's house, and said, "only an ascetic can live in the house of the ascetic," and he made it his abode.[35]

In many ways this is a prototypical conversion narrative in Sufi hagiography.[36] It depicts a Muslim saint demonstrating his dominance of a Hindu saint through a public display of miracles. (This encounter narrative is similar to the Biblical and Qur'anic story of Moses confronting the pharaoh.) Such an encounter is either read as an example of Muslim erasure of Hindu spaces or dismissed as fabulous.

I argue that read carefully, the encounter details a process of translation between two sacral regimes. The encounter explains the power of the shaykh and of the yogi, as well as the social function of ascetics in medieval Sind. The language of the encounter is instructive: the yogi compares his magic to that of the Sufi "as a stone is in front of the mountains" or a "droplet in front of a river"—that is, the difference is a matter of scale and not of kind. This equivalence is a technical one: the same word (*sahr*) is used to refer to the supernatural powers of both the Sufi and the yogi. Similarly, when Baba Farid occupies the house of the yogi, he calls attention to the fact that he can do so because they are both ascetics (*fakir*). What separates them is that the yogi was unjust to the people of the village—he was extracting a tax from them, and his presence was a burden to them. The encounter thus showcases a political transition from one sacral power to another. Lastly, and perhaps most suggestively, this encounter between the yogi and Baba Farid is framed through descriptions of nature and the built environment—the tree under which Farid sits; the imagery of the mountain and stone, the river and droplet; and the built house (*makan*) of the yogi. This language situates the encounter in the material world rather than a supernatural one. The dual habitation of the well (belonging to both Qasim and to Farid) and of the house (belonging to both the yogi and the Sufi) reflects a politics of cohabitation in Sind's medieval landscape. At the very least, it suggests a framework within which one can recognize different sacral traditions.

Disciplining Subjects

Thus we can see that *Chachnama* is a political theory concerned with alliances, rule of law, justice, and good governance. Further we see that *Chachnama* uses Hindu-Buddhist encounters as social and political precedents for Muslim-Hindu encounters. While *Chachnama* presents a politics of accommodation, it is not an exclusively egalitarian political vision. Indeed, the text presents social difference in the thirteen century and may reflect the biases of its time. This is most apparent in the treatment of nomadic Jat people, who in *Chachnama* are seen as a threat to all political regimes. Institutionalized through legal structures in *Chachnama* is a social hierarchy where the Jats appear to be subjugated. This subjugation begins with Chach and is maintained under Qasim.

Who were the Jats and why are they addressed in the history of Chach? In the thirteenth century, *Chachnama* presents the Jats as a nomadic people.[37] For *Chachnama* nomadic populations are a political problem. The Jats are described most often as the itinerant people who resist even after the fall of the fort. They exist outside of fort cities, and throughout *Chachnama* their movement is destabilizing. They are a danger to the prosperity of the urban polity. To curtail their threat requires specific legal structures. *Chachnama* addresses this challenge cyclically, first with Chach and then with Qasim. After Chach conquers the city of Brahmanabad, he imposes a tax on the people and makes a special arrangement for the Jats from Lohana who opposed him. *Chachnama* narrates,

> Then Chach stayed in the fort of Brahmanabad and, for the sake of commerce and the safety of the people, he instituted a tax. Then he called forth and humiliated the Jats of Lohana and punished and imprisoned their leader. He prohibited them from carrying swords or wearing clothes of silk or spun cotton. Their upper covering could be sewn, but their lower covering could not be sewn and could be of only black or red color. They could not put saddles on their horses. They could never cover their heads or their feet. When they left their houses, they had to be accompanied by a dog. They would supply the administrator's kitchen with cooking wood. They would be employed as guides and spies. And they would cultivate such qualities so that when an enemy approached the fort, they would be able to defend it on their own honor.[38]

We can see this account as a demonstration of Chach's political power. Chach dictates everything from clothing to movement of the Jats. We can understand this account as making a case for the settlement of a previously nomadic people in order to govern them and provide political stability. The nomadic population is sanctioned—they are required to report directly to the city's administration and to be employed as spies and guides. Thus Chach transitions them from nomadism to his own subjects. To cement this political subjugation, he marries a Jat woman.[39]

The Jats are thus cast as a nomadic population that must be either eradicated or policed under both Chach's reign and the polity of Qasim. Jats are invoked in the Qasim cycle when they continue to resist Qasim's armies even after the fall of a fort or even after making political alliances. In dealing with the nomadic Jats, Qasim asks his new advisors about existing laws governing them in Sind: "What was the matter of the Jats with Chach and Dahar?" The ministers Siaker and Moka reply with a legal history that goes back to Chach:

> During the rule of Chach, the Jats of Lohana (that is, those who lived in the area of Lakha and Samma) were prohibited from wearing soft clothes, from covering their heads, and from wearing a rough, black sheet on their torso. When they exited their homes, they were accompanied by dogs. By this, they could be identified from afar. . . . They are barbaric, prone to rebellion and thievery on the roads. They were the same even in Daybul, raiding along with others. They are also responsible for bringing cooking wood to the kitchens of the kings.
>
> Said Muhammad bin Qasim: "How offensive (*makruh*) are these people! They are like the jungle dwellers in the lands of Persia (*Fars*) and Makran (*Kuhpaia*) who have the same ways." Hence, Muhammad bin Qasim kept on them their existing laws, just as Amir al-Mominin 'Umar bin Khattab had insisted that the nomadic inhabitants of Syria host any traveler and give them food for a night, and if the traveler were sick, for three nights.[40]

The Jats are described as nomadic, undisciplined subjects who refuse to submit to any political order. To address the Jat problem, *Chachnama* layers three levels of history: the precedence of Chach's laws, Muhammad bin Qasim's continued legal sanction of the Jats, and finally the earliest Muslim political leaders' dealings with nomadic peoples. In invoking the past of Chach, Qasim is assisted by the legal knowledge of local ministers. When Qasim reaffirms this rule, he makes comparisons to other political spaces that disciplined nomadic peoples. Note, however, that never does *Chachnama* suggest dealing with a recalcitrant population through conversion.

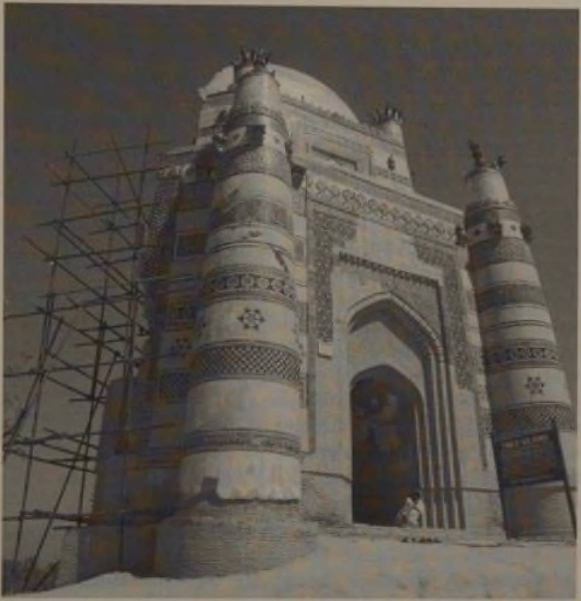
The cases of political accommodation and the legal disciplining of unruly subjects illustrate how *Chachnama* constitutes a robust theory of managing difference. This theory is based on alliance and law. In this theory, no community is under duress to convert to Islam. Their treatment under new regimes is based on context and is enacted through law and taxation. The first enactment of this theory is with a community of merchants, artisans, and laborers who are political powerful because they are essential to the local economy. They are to be embraced, their customs supported, and their prosperity ensured because with them comes the prosperity of the polity. In return for the accommodation of their religious practices, they offer the Muslim leader, Qasim, their loyalty. The other enactment of this theory is with a nomadic tribal community that must be regulated and punitively circumscribed such that they cannot disrupt the political regime.

Both of these cases can be read as annotations of a translation act in the *Chachnama*—they treat the polity's new subjects as legal and moral agents. In both cases, *Chachnama* posits a legal or historical precedent from the Hindu polity of Chach and the early Muslim polities of Syria. *Chachnama* as political theory engages difference from the perspective of achieving an ordered city and demonstrating the contours and limits of that exercise with examples, edicts, and declarations. The political model for understanding difference in *Chachnama* is not based on a mutually recognizable theology but on a political and legal understanding of governance.

5

The Half Smile

THE SACRAL TERRAIN OF UCH is dotted with shrines to prominent daughters and wives of Sufis. The shrines are dedicated to Bibi Jawindi, Bibi Ayesha, and Bibi Tigni. These women are remembered as pious, influential carriers of Sufi ethics who cemented the city's spiritual claims. In contemporary memory, they are evoked as custodians of the sacral power of the city. Jawindi's monument is perhaps the most iconic representation of Uch to the outside world and is a UNESCO World Heritage site. She was the granddaughter of the great Uch Sufi Makhdum Jahaniyan Jahan Gasht (d. 1384). Her shrine was built in 1499 by Khurasani prince Muhammad Dilshad and was partially destroyed in the eighteenth century when the river Indus changed its course. Yet despite this catastrophic event, it still stands as a marvel to all visitors. Jawindi's memory is as iconic as the material remains of her shrine, a living presence in the sacral space of Uch, with supplicants and devotees approaching her for succor. The presence of Bibi Jawindi's shrine in the topography of Uch testifies to her significance in the history of the region. Yet the scholarly accounts which focus on the sacral history of Uch do not highlight female saints.[1] Even general histories of Sufism in India make only very rare mention of female saints (such as Lal Ded from Kashmir), making our understanding of Sufi Islam in India devoutly masculine.



Tomb of Bibi Jawindi. (Photo © Manan Ahmed Asif.)

The material history and practices surrounding Bibi Jawindi and her tomb highlight the erasure of women from histories in contemporary Uch. What kind of histories could be written if we were to see women as integral actors in the most powerful state in medieval northern India? Within the conquest framework, *Chachnama* is only a story about two male conquerors—Chach and Qasim. But there is another radically different reading possible when we look at the role women play in this political landscape. What happens to *Chachnama* if we see past its ostensible structure of male protagonists to other interpretative frames? Said differently, what if *Chachnama* is recast as a story about political power that necessarily includes women? In the conquest framework, the narrative is driven by the logic of expansion, and the story moves forward as the conquest moves forward: spatially and politically. Reframing *Chachnama* as political theory reveals that women are chief drivers of the narrative. Their actions propel the narrative, their gaze slows time in the text, their monologues summarize and explain how to be a just ruler and a just subject. They are, in effect, ethical subjects *par excellence*. My contention is that *Chachnama* enacts its ethics through the speech and gaze of the women protagonists in the text. Their gaze, their conduct, their speech demonstrate how an ethical person can inhabit the political world of Sind in the early thirteenth century.

Throughout this book I have argued that reading *Chachnama* as political theory reveals a solution to ontological and political difference via accommodation and alliance. What emerges in this chapter is that ethics for *Chachnama* are defined by the conduct and speech of women. That is, the women characters present an ethos that dictates how one ought to behave in social and political relationships, how one listens to the other, and how a ruler acts justly toward his subjects. When we dislocate the text from its perch as a narrative of conquest, the structure of protagonists in the text also shifts remarkably. It is the female gaze that allows us to enter the text and "see" the masculinity of Chach, Qasim, and Dahar elaborated through depictions of their valor in battle, their asceticism, and their capacity to listen and take advice. It is crucial to follow the woman's gaze in *Chachnama*, for it orients us toward possible audiences of the text in early-thirteenth-century Uch.

The accounts of women in *Chachnama* have always been deemed romantic and thus ignored. This was the verdict of colonial historians, and postcolonial readers have maintained this view of the text.[2] The women in *Chachnama* were seen as marginal to its history, reduced to their transgressive sexuality. Indeed, this depiction parallels that of women in Persianate historiography more broadly. There, women are read through moralist claims about the nature of womanhood. Given that in the historical record women often appear as dynamic and powerful, it is reductive when women are ignored simply for their sexual transgression or capacity to lie, etc. By and large, women are not read as ethical subjects, let alone politically significant ones.[3] To enact such a reading is not to simply highlight women's roles. Rather it is to make a broader claim for revisiting our historical records for the diverse social worlds occluded when we limit our readings to kings and conquerors—or conversely, not see women as kings and conquerors. What does a political world look like that includes politically powerful women who exact ethical practice alongside other actors, such as advisors, allies, and nobility of different communities?

This chapter focuses on three episodes from the beginning, middle, and end of *Chachnama:* Chach's ascension to the throne, Qasim's judgment on civilian prisoners, and the death of Qasim in Baghdad. The protagonists of these episodes are women, and the text speaks from their perspective. The episodes are about the relationship between political power and just forms of rule. They focus on political will, on desire, on trusting intuition, and on the need for acuity in understanding political risks. If we read Chach and Qasim as ideal and archetypal protagonists, then we must read the women—from Sohnan Devi, to Queen Ladi, to the daughters who end Qasim's rule—also as archetypal, ethical subjects who affirm the ideal Chach and reveal the limits of Qasim. After an analysis of these episodes, I look at other characters, who are similarly important ideal ethical subjects, to consider the wider social world of the thirteenth century. Finally, I trace how later historical accounts citing *Chachnama* reduce female subjects to transgressive figures or figures of resistance.

Ethical Subjects

Let us begin with the beginning of *Chachnama,* after Chach has arrived and the narrative first slows down to describe him. He comes from a Brahmin ascetic family and is looking to be employed as a scribe.

Having attained employment in the court of the king of Aror, Rai Sahasi, Chach quickly becomes a favorite and often visits the interior of the palace. It is on one such visit that he is seen by the queen, Sohnan Devi. Through her gaze the reader first *sees* Chach. She watches him and finds him to be "beautiful, well-proportioned, with rosy red cheeks."[4] She is immediately besotted, and "the plant of love blossomed to a tree in her heart." The king, *Chachnama* narrates, although a kind and just ruler, is old and incapable of fathering sons, and so Sohnan Devi sends a message to Chach: "Oh Chach! The arrows of your eyelashes have wounded my heart. Your separation is a noose around my neck. I hope that you will cure my ills with your presence and remove this noose from my neck with your hands and put instead garlands of love and companionship. If you refuse me, I will kill myself."[5] Chach refuses the entreaty and declares it to be foolhardy to cheat one's king and that this would lead to disrepair in this life and discredit in the next:

> Because we are Brahmin, my father and my brother are ascetic and sit in meditation. It is enough for me to serve at the king's pleasure, where I spend my life between hope and fear. For it is true that a servant of kings is always suspended between praise and condemnation. There are four things that one should never trust: a king, fire, a snake, and water. Hence, I cannot take more sins upon myself while engaged in such worldly pursuits.[6]

Chach was from a family of ascetics, and he notes here that he has already transgressed the dictates of his ascetic life. He insists that he is attempting to be an ethical man while in the service of the king ("I cannot take more sins upon myself"). He does not rebuke the queen or call her immoral. Rather, he admits his own culpability. This is the first instance of Chach making a choice to be an ethical subject. This emphasis is reflected by Sohnan Devi, who accepts Chach's decision. Instead of becoming angry and vowing revenge, which is a more typical reaction in *adab* stories of a woman in power and a young protagonist, she "replied with great love and care," saying that "even if you refrain from my love and company, at least let me see you from time to time so that I can live with the hope of your company."[7] On receiving this reply, Chach is relieved. Over time he sometimes sees her, such that their feelings toward each other strengthen. Yet Chach and Sohnan Devi do not step outside of the bounds of ethical conduct, even though rumors circulate. The declaration and restraint of desire critically sets up their relationship as one concerning political power.

Chachnama then presents Sohnan Devi as the architect who brings Chach to power. It is Sohnan Devi who first informs Chach that the king has passed away. The king leaves no son. Sohnan asks Chach to come to her and tells him how to become the king of Aror: "My intellect argues that if you act with courage at this point, this kingdom, by God's grace, will be yours."[8] Chach quickly agrees to her plan, adding only that he should also consult "devoted servants" about it. The queen's scheme is to keep the news of the king's death secret for six months, during which time they incite other claimants to the throne to eliminate each other. Finally, with enough of their own supporters in the court, the queen declares Chach as the caretaker prime minister for a seriously ill king. In detailing this coup, *Chachama* emphasizes that the wit and wisdom of Sohnan Devi are the catalyst for action, with Chach as the willing apprentice.

After six months, they announce Sahasi's death. When Sahasi's brother learns of his death, he assembles an army and descends on Aror to challenge Chach for the throne. Chach is frightened and goes to Sohnan Devi for advice: "This claimant to the throne is now here. What do you advise?" Sohnan Devi smiles and responds, "I am a veiled woman. If you need me to fight for you, then give me your clothes so I can go out and fight while you sit inside here, wearing my clothes. Have you not heard the wise men say that when one decides on a task, after due consultations, he must fulfil it with determination? This is your kingdom now, and it is in your name. What advice is left? Go out like a lion and defend your claim, for it is better to die with honor and renown than to be perceived as weak by your peers."[9]

The queen declares that they have already made a plan and have been acting on it. Note that the queen understands that political strategy requires consultation and that political action requires bravery and steadfastness. Her challenge to Chach's masculinity and honor propel him to face Rai Mahrit, whom he kills in battle. After this victory, the queen assembles the dignitaries of the court, and in public she announces that there is no biological heir to the throne. She declares that Chach has proven himself as someone of high intellect and valor that therefore he is the rightful custodian of the polity. She concludes that her hand should be given in marriage to Chach so that he will become the new king. The court approves, and she is married to Chach and has two sons.

The ascension of Chach, then, is only through the political acumen of Sohnan Devi, who while declaring her desire for him respects the boundaries of his ethics as well as the social decorum of the court. In *Chachnama*, Sohnan Devi epitomizes a political subjecthood that is ethical and astute. She sets the tone for the rest of the text, where women characters are key to political life. It is insufficient to read Sohnan Devi as simply a king maker or an enabler for Chach. Her direct pronouncements carry a political theory: a capable, moral person can become a king without a blood claim; political will requires the management of the opinions of both the public and elite courtiers; and political will requires bravery, ruthlessness, and commitment. Indeed, she is herself the ruler while Chach is still making his claim. Sohnan Devi thus shows extraordinary political acumen and a clear sense of what it means to be an ethical ruler.

The second episode comes in the middle of the narrative and concerns Chach's son Raja Dahar and his overthrow by Qasim. The Hindu queen Ladi, the wife of Dahar, is now the protagonist who provides political acumen to the Muslim conqueror. Qasim has already killed Dahar, and he is now besieging the fort of Aror. Ladi is captured by the Muslim army and is asked to go to the ramparts and inform the inhabitants that their king is dead and that they should surrender. She goes to the fort, recounts Dahar's death, and asks the people to surrender. They yell back, "You are a liar. You have joined these cow-eating thieves. Our king is still alive, and he will come with a great army of many horses and drunk elephants, and he will repel these enemies. You have soiled yourself with these Arabs and prefer them to your own people. Upon hearing this, Muhammad bin Qasim said, 'Statehood has left the house of Salaij.'"[10]

Ladi does not respond to the accusations of treason from her subjects but rather shows great restraint. Meanwhile, the inhabitants of the city go to another powerful woman, a priestess, and ask her to determine whether Dahar is alive or whether Queen Ladi is lying. The priestess meditates for a day and then says, "I traveled from the Caucasus to the Caucasus—around the world—but saw no sign of him in Hind or in Sind, nor any word of him. If he was alive, he would not be able to hide from me. To give you proof of my travels: here are still-green shoots from the plants of Ceylon. I am convinced your king is dead."[11] Here is another powerful woman whose sacral claim over the landscape is asserted and found convincing. Note that *Chachnama* provides a range of women who hold political power ("he would not be able to hide from me"). The people are convinced by this and surrender to Qasim after declaring that they are now under his protection.

After Qasim enters Aror and encounters the idol in the temple, he announces hastily that those who had fought the invasion—even if now supplicant—will be killed. Upon hearing this, Queen Ladi interjects that Qasim's command is unwise: "'The inhabitants of this city are builders and traders. They keep this city alive and green. It is through their labor that the treasury and the granary are full. If you kill them, you will be killing your own wealth.' Muhammad Qasim answered, 'This is the order of Queen Ladi,' and he granted peace to them all."[12]

Thus Queen Ladi, who was abused and accused of disloyalty by the people of Aror, is the instrument of their salvation. Qasim, who is the conquering commander, does not hesitate to listen to the deposed queen or to issue a command in her name. What Queen Ladi is emphasizing to Qasim is that the safety and continuing livelihood of the people of Aror are the foundation of his political rule. To further cement this argument in *Chachama*, Qasim takes Queen Ladi as his own wife. Like Chach's marriage to the wife of the previous king, Qasim's marriage to Ladi cements the bond of history to the political, showing that new regimes build upon existing structures of power. Like Sohnan Devi, Ladi speaks to and for the people of Sind and manages the transition of power without violence or bloodshed. Ladi provides Qasim with the techniques of rule that he needs to found a polity in Sind.

It is after Qasim's marriage to Ladi that *Chachnama* describes the legal status of non-Muslims in the new polity. Qasim takes Ladi's advice to build the foundation for a diverse population. He enacts a poll tax on non-Muslims: the purest weight of silver for the nobility, a lesser weight for the lesser elite, and so on. He declares his subjects free to practice the religion of their choice, and he makes appointments to bureaucratic and administrative posts without any question of conversion. He makes a register of the traders, artisans, and farmers and appoints them a relief fund because the war has hurt them the most. He takes Dahar's nobles as his advisors and appoints Brahmins to key positions, telling them that he has full confidence in their abilities. These basic acts of statecraft and integration of political regimes mirror

Chach's appointment of Buddhist advisors. *Chachnama*'s presentation of ethics for a ruler and his diverse subjects is conveyed through the political prowess and guidance of Sohnan Devi and Queen Ladi. Put simply, Sohnan Devi charts the rise of power for Chach, and Ladi cements the rule of Qasim.

The third episode concerns the daughters of Dahar and brings us to the end of Muhammad bin Qasim, and to the end of *Chachnama* itself. In the last section of the text, this episode is inconspicuously titled "Muhammad Qasim Receives a Message from the Capital." To fully comprehend the argument behind the narrative of Qasim's death, we have to step back and see the entirety of the portrait of Muhammad bin Qasim as sketched in *Chachnama*. The clearest assessment of Qasim occurs halfway through the narrative, after he has conquered the fort of Aror: "The people of the fort, noble and common, said, 'We had heard of Muhammad Qasim's honesty, devotion, empathy, justice, compassion, and forthrightness, and now we have seen it too.'"[13] These traits are highlighted in various episodes: in Qasim's dealings with soldiers, with fort governors, with Dahar and his family, with nobles, and with religious notables. Qasim is just, he is ethical, he is moral, he is kind, and he is brave. In these characteristics, Qasim is akin to the ideal subjecthood of Chach. There is a critical difference, however: Qasim's fealty to his political superiors, such as Hajjaj or the caliph. Again and again, Qasim surrenders his own feelings and judgments to those of his superiors. He is chastised by them for granting too many pardons, for bestowing grants on local nobles and trusting their troops in his armies, and for not inflicting higher taxes. Though he resists, he never rebels, remaining steadfast in his deference to hierarchy. This is the radical difference between Chach and Qasim, even though they are both ideal archetypes in the text. Qasim is beholden to a corruptible center, whereas Chach is driven by his own ethics. This is the radical difference explored at the end of the text, and the denouement lies in the hands of two women who take revenge for their father's death.

When Qasim dethrones Dahar, his daughters are captured by the army and are sent to the capital, Baghdad, in the hands of East African slaves. *Chachnama* narrates that after the women are taken to the court of the caliph, they are placed in his harem. He asks that they be brought to him after they have rested for a few days. They are then presented to the caliph, who through a translator inquires about the eldest one so that he can take her to his bed while the younger one awaits her turn. The translator first asks their names, and the eldest calls herself Suria Deo. The younger calls herself Pirmal Deo. The caliph chooses Suria Deo to be taken to his chambers. When he sees her, he is taken by her beauty and grace, and "his bleeding heart could no longer remain patient." He grabs her hand and pulls her to him. Suria pulls back and speaks: "May you live long, O King, but this delicate slave is not worthy of a king's night, since the just commander Imaduddin Muhammad Qasim kept us in his company for three nights before sending us to serve you in the capital. Or is this your strange custom? Such indignities are not for kings."[14] The caliph, who is "already besotted and impatient from desire" is shocked. Devoid of his senses, he does not pause to question her or investigate the matter further. Instead, he immediately calls for paper, and "with his own hand wrote to Qasim," ordering that wherever he may be, when he receives his order, "he should have himself sewn inside uncured leather, stuffed in a box, and carried to the capital."[15]

The opening of this episode describes the caliph as a licentious figure whose interest is in the sexual conquest of the prisoners. The women, however, subvert the narrative of conquest when they strategically claim that Muhammad bin Qasim has already "taken their bodies" and thus "despoiled" them. They also claim a notion of proper conduct for a king and reveal that the caliph is found lacking. This claim causes the caliph to act hastily, and he orders the brutal death of his commander, at Qasim's own hand.[16]

The order reaches Qasim when he is in Udaipur, and he asks to be wrapped in wet sheepskin and placed in a box. He dies as a result of his entombment in leather, en route to Baghdad. *Chachnama* notes that the political appointments made by Qasim stand, and the polity he created remained, although he was gone. When the box reaches the caliph, he calls for the daughters to come from seclusion and observe the dead body of the commander. When they arrive, they see the caliph rubbing a stick on Qasim's exposed teeth and saying, "O daughters of raja, gaze at one who obeys my commands. My rule extends to all regions; as soon as he heard from me in Kanauj, he did as I ordered and gave up his life."[17]

On hearing the caliph, the eldest daughter gives a half-smile, unveils herself, and speaks. This is the longest monologue in *Chachnama*, reflecting its significance for the text. She begins with a theory of rule and then explains the necessity of her actions in pursuit of justice:

> May God keep the king safe forever, and may his rule continue for ages. It is necessary for the wise ruler of the time to weigh what he hears from friend or foe on the scale of intellect and compare it to his heart's intuition. Only once he is free from doubt should he proclaim according to the demands of justice, such that the wrath of Fate may spare him and his people not fault him. Your command does hold sway, but your heart lacks all understanding. In the ways of our honor, Muhammad bin Qasim was like a brother or son to us and never extended a hand of desire toward us. Yet he had killed the king of Hind and Sind, destroyed the rule of my forefathers, and made us slaves. For this, we sought our revenge on him. To ruin him and to seek appropriate revenge, we lied in front of the caliph. Our purpose was successful, and we gathered our revenge as the caliph's orders were fulfilled.[18]

Here the daughters reveal their lie. They assert respect, admiration, and even filial affection for Qasim, for he had respected their purity. Yet he had to die, for it was their ethical duty to avenge their father. They have lied in pursuit of justice. Further, they show that although the caliph has power, he lacks understanding because he is corrupted by desire:

> If this caliph did not have desire clouding his mind, he would have investigated the matter prior to issuing his command, and today he would not be in this place of shame and dishonor. And if Muhammad bin Qasim had used his intellect, he would have walked until one day's journey from the capital and only then had himself sewn in leather. When investigated, he would have been set free and not ruined.[19]

He has acted in haste and has not investigated their false claim. The daughters shame the caliph from their position as pure ethical subjects. They also condemn Qasim for his adherence to the caliph's order which caused his death. The caliph, faced with this indictment, now confronts his own shameful haste. Lamenting that he has killed his own commander and "awash in sorrow, he bit the back of his hand." The caliph is left speechless. Dahar's daughter speaks the last words of *Chachnama:*

> For the sake of two slave girls, you killed a commander who imprisoned a hundred thousand like us and defeated seventy kings of Hind and Sind. He ordered the construction of mosques and minarets where temples stood. Even if he had misbehaved or done something to displease you, even then a selfish person would not have killed Muhammad bin Qasim. The caliph ordered that the two daughters be immured.[20]

There is no further gloss in the text, but it concludes with a declaration: "And since that day to this, Islam's banner has flown higher and prospered." The daughter's rebuke to the caliph that he should have thought of his own self-interest (and by extension, the interest of the polity) crystallizes that at the heart of the imperium, there must be a focus on the entirety of the empire, including all of its inhabitants. The women show that the caliph was instead ruled by his base desires. If we read this last declaration in light of the opening of the daughter's monologue ("Such indignities are not for kings") we have an encapsulation of how this episode demonstrates the moral certitude required for statecraft. The caliph has no words; he never speaks again in the text, but for their lie, he punishes them by having them immured in a wall.[21]

Chachnama thus ends with a scathing critique of a corrupt Muslim rule. It condemns the center of a Muslim empire as a corrupt and corrupting world. It is a place where political rule does not follow the guidelines for a just and ethical kingship as exemplified in the account of the Brahmin Chach. The account's spatial movement from the frontier to the center moves in tandem with the perspective shift from the conqueror to the conquered. The book ends with an extensive first-person critique of the Muslim state from the perspective of a female Hindu slave.

The ethics in *Chachnama* are articulated at the end of the text by the eldest daughter of Dahar as a series of imperatives to the caliph: to think, to reflect, to consult, to listen to one's heart, to be independent of undue influence. The caliph, depicted as the corrupt, immoral center of power, follows none of these imperatives. He appears in *Chachnama* only in this episode, and he is a prisoner of his desires, an egotistical ruler. This corruption at the center is juxtaposed with Qasim's obedience to the chain of command. As the daughter points out, Qasim foolishly followed the order and gave up his life when he could have easily delayed the implementation and be alive as a result. The daughter marks these failures at both the center and the periphery, in both the ruler and the commander.

Critically, *Chachnama* makes their resistance to the regime a key ethics for these two women. From their perspective, the lie was an act of vengeance against a foreign usurper, and *Chachnama* does not denigrate that act. Their ethics remains wholly congruent to the political theory of *Chachnama*—it is the same as the resistance offered by the Buddhist priest to Chach, or by Dahar's nobles and ministers to Qasim, or by the people of Brahmanabad or Aror to the Muslims. All of whom, *Chachnama* demonstrates, are ultimately folded back into the new regime. Yet again, this calls to attention the corruption of Baghdad's caliph who mercilessly has the women immured for exercising their right to resistance.

Why does *Chachnama* end with the self-sacrifice of its Muslim protagonist? There are a number of places where the noblewomen who resist Muslim forces contemplate self-immolation rather than capture. Yet even there, the emphasis is on individual acts of resistance against the political order. Qasim, the ideal commander of the Muslim army, is modeled after the ideal ruler Chach, but his deference to Hajjaj and to the political hierarchy of the capital is repeatedly shown to be his singular weakness. The end of Qasim is a demonstration of the very ethics described by the daughter of Dahar at the end: the need for independent thought as well as the necessity to act according to one's own intuition and understanding.

Qasim's death is the logical coda for a political theory that focuses on the righteous, learned protagonist Chach. *Chachnama* valorizes his faith, his dedication to his family, his capacity to be pure of desire, his partnership with Sohnan Devi, his reliance on his minister's advice, and his articulation of a limited polity that does not impugn on other states. Chach learns and grows into a just ruler, and he does so under the political tutelage of Sohnan Devi. Qasim learns and grows as a commander, and he enacts his just rules under the guidance of Ladi. The corruption at the center of Muslim empire is revealed by the resistance of the two daughters. *Chachnama*, forever read as a depiction of a masculine heroic ethos of Islam, is a markedly different text when seen through the gaze of the noblewomen in the text.

Chachnama's political theory is consistent in its emphasis on Brahmin women as ethical subjects, on the political expedience of alliances with Indic kings, and on the necessity of advisors and ministers for just rule. The text demonstrates structures of power that cross sectarian lines and provide a political theory that makes that world possible. It is important to understand Kufi's text as explicating the diverse world of thirteenth-century Sind—which is generally seen as monopolitical and monotheistic. *Chachnama* betrays no anxiety over the marriage of a Muslim Arab commander to a Sindhi Hindu queen. Nor does it suggest anxiety in presenting a world where women hold political powers.

It is not only women who are characterized by ethical power in the text. *Chachnama* presents numerous other characters who embody ethical subjecthood and are treated with similar terms of conviction and praise. These character are prophets, seers, ministers, and advisors, and their roles range from Brahmin nobility to neighboring kings who are described through a language of translation. One key example in *Chachnama* is of Dahar's son Jaisinha, who flees Aror ahead of Qasim's army, hoping to raise troops from the realm of the raja of Kiraj. In the text he is given a pedigreed name which highlights not only his bravery but also that of his father, Dahar.

> According to the Brahmins of Aror, Jaisinha son of Dahar was unparalleled in masculinity and cleverness. The account of his birth is thus: One day, Raja Dahar took his contingent to the hunting grounds. Once out of the city, they released the dogs, wolves, and wildcats on the ground, and the eagles, kites, and hawks in the air. A lion confronted the hunting party, and everyone scattered—except for Dahar, who dismounted his horse to face the lion. Dahar wrapped his hand in a sheet and plunged it into the lion's mouth. Then he cut off the lion's front paws with his sword. He then took his hand out and tore open the stomach of the lion. The lion died from the wounds.

> The people from his party, frightened, ran back to the queen and informed her that Dahar was fighting a lion. She was pregnant at the time. When she heard the report, she was overwhelmed by her love and concern for his safety and she fainted. When Dahar returned, she had died, but he saw that the child was kicking in her stomach. He ordered her stomach to be opened. A living son was produced. Dahar gave his son to the wet nurse and called him Jaisinha, meaning *al-Muzafar ba al-Asad* (Victorious Lion)—in Persian, *Sher-e Firuz*.[22]

This archetypal prince is given a name in three languages to signify the story of his birth. The story, in turn, explains his bravery, modesty, and piety. The presentation of the prince as an ethical subject builds alongside this translation of his persona within the linguistic and ethnic registers. When Jaisinha arrives at the palace of the raja of Kiraj, he is offered a seat in the inner palace. He averts his eyes from the women, prompting the raja to exclaim, "These women are like your mothers and sisters; do not be shy in front of them." Jaisinha responds, "We are a family of ascetics and therefore cannot gaze upon marriageable (*namahram*) women. The raja then excused him from raising his eyes and praised his piety and restraint."[23]

Though Jaisinha keeps his gaze averted, he is seen by the raja's sister, who falls in love with him. She is smitten with his "complete beauty, tall like a juniper tree (*'ar'ar*), moon faced, with a divine character."[24] This description of a man's physical beauty parallels the descriptions of Chach and Qasim earlier in the text. All of these are the perspectives of a woman. In this case, as in others, the inner beauty of their character matches their outer beauty; thus, Jaisinha rebuffs the advances of the sister.

Like Jaisinha's name, his ethics transcend those of an ascetic Brahmin to incorporate values shared by Muslims. *Chachnama* insists that virtue and beauty are linked, and the ethics governing them are not explicitly Islamic. Hence the Brahmin prince exhibits all virtue and moral uprightness that ought to be present in a Muslim warrior such as Qasim. One is able to see this prince as an ethical subject when one looks past the insistence that the text has only two protagonists: Chach and Qasim. When these two are read as conquerors, their personalities and actions dominate the text, but when they are read as embodiments of political theory, they are placed in a constellation of characters such as the women and the princes.

How was this political theory of diverse social worlds, including those of women and powerful Hindu nobility, reflected in contemporaneous accounts of the thirteenth century? Contemporary examples of such worlds can be seen in Juzjani's *Tabaqat-i Nasiri*, which provides an eyewitness account of Razia, the eldest daughter of Illtutmish, who ascended to the throne of Delhi and ruled for three years and six days. Juzjani describes Razia as "a great king, with intelligence and wisdom, who enacted justice on the world, nurtured the people and the army, and in all possessed every quality that a king possessed."[25] She governed during the lifetime of Iltutmish. When the oldest son, Nasiruddin Mahmud, died from illness, Iltutmish declared her as his heir to the throne. Juzjani notes that when Iltutmish gave that order, some of his advisors asked whether it was wise to appoint a woman when he had another son. Iltutmish replied, "My sons are busy with their youth and luxury and do not possess the means to govern, and the state will not function under them. When I am dead, you will realize that there is no one more fit to rule than my daughter." Then Juzjani adds, "It happened exactly as the wise king had predicted."[26]

Though Juzjani goes on to narrate the extreme political difficulties faced by Razia—and her ouster—it is worth pausing and noting that for Iltutmish and for Juzjani, there was no moral or ethical barrier to Razia's kingship. Juzjani gives ample evidence of elite women who manage the rise and fall of kings, including Razia's own mother as well as the mother of Ruknuddin Feroz Shah. In Juzjani's account, they manage the ascension to throne of all of Iltutmish's successors and act as governors as well as advisors. The mother was central to the ascension of even Nasiruddin Mahmud Shah (r. 1246–1266), under whose rule Juzjani completed the *Tabaqat*. These examples of Turkic and Arab elite women demonstrate a thirteenth-century courtly culture where women are full political agents, engaged in the struggle for political control. What *Chachnama* demonstrates, however, is that as ethical subjects women are key custodians of an ideal political theory that governs struggles of justice, alliances, accommodation, and recognition of differential power.

Juzjani also documents an ethics of virtue, righteousness, and justice in his depiction of deposed Hindu kings. Juzjani was appointed to Laknauti and was an eyewitness of this transfer of political power. In his description of the deposed raja of Lukhmina (Laknauti), Juzjani recounts the raja's birth and an eighty-year rule that was as just and generous as the rule of the Muslims in Delhi.[27] Such virtuous readings of non-Muslim elite are present as well in Amir Khusrau's *Duval Rani va Khizr Khan* (commissioned by Prince Khizr Khan in 1314), which imagines a romance between the Muslim Prince Khizr and the Brahmin princess Duval Rani as an exemplum of classical Arabic and Persian romances.[28]

Transgressive Subjects

The story of Qasim's death, staged far from the capital of Uch, in the global capital of Baghdad, is the ethical coda for *Chachnama's* political theory. The act and speech of the daughters illuminate the central logic of *Chachnama:* an assertion of an ethical and just actor against the political and moral instability inside the power structure. *Chachnama* uses potent symbols of subversion and power, where a deceptively benign half smile reveals the corruption and potential disruption of state power.

As I have demonstrated, Dahar's daughter is an ethical, politically astute woman who makes a severe indictment of a corrupt regime. Yet she enters the subsequent Persianate historiography simply as a transgressive and corrupt woman who threatens the political order.[29] Ibn Batutta's mid-fourteenth-century works similarly record the political ascension of Razia Sultana, whose memory is tied to her transgressions of dressing in male battle attire and consorting with an African slave.[30] These fourteenth-century accounts focus on the transgression of the women, erasing the naturalness of political power accorded to them as theory or practice in *Chachnama* or in Juzjani's writings.

This story of Qasim's death in *Chachnama* is the earliest account in any medieval Persian text. It is in Ayn ul-Mulk Abdullah Mahru's *Insha'i Mahru*, a collection of administrative letters written during the reign of Firuz Shah Tughluq (1351–1388). In his letters, Mahru, a governor in Lahore, admonishes a Sindhi noble for his failure to provide military support. He launches into a description of the character of the people of Sind, and to explain the land, he turns to "a History of Dahar, son of Chach" (*Ta'rikh-i Dahar-i Chach*), which is "well known to the common people in the land of Sind."[31] It is *Chachnama*, Mahru notes, that is the "story of treachery and betrayal" of the Sindhi people. Mahru then details the plot of the daughters of Dahar to take revenge on Qasim. Mahru's account hues closely to the details in *Chachnama* but with one telling change: he omits the monologue of the daughter and instead concludes that the women represent the "trickery, betrayal, and lies are the habits of the people of Sind."[32] Mahru ignores the ethical subjecthood of the daughters and reduces their act to one of a transgression against the central authority. For Mahru, the women's lie is a historical precedent for the character of the people of Uch; it allows him to articulate a historical critique of noncompliance to his stately authority.

Qasim's death is also repeated in the local chronicles of Sind's past that were written in the mid-fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, as well as in the late-eighteenth-century social history *Tuhfat al-Kiram*. All of these texts either reference or reproduce the *Chachnama* account, with some minor changes. (Qani' in *Tuhfat al-Kiram*, has the women crushed under the feet of elephants.) These references do not reproduce the moral condemnation of Mahru.

British colonial accounts of Sind's history also include this story. In 1861, Thomas Hood penned a versification of the story in *The Daughters of King Daher*, where "in the dark eyes of the Indian maids / A subtle smile grew."[33] Hood reduces the women to Oriental romantic subjects with conniving half smiles, at the mercy of a despotic Muslim king.

While medieval and colonial accounts reduced the women of *Chachnama* to romantic and transgressive subjects, they were differently recuperated as resistors in Sindhi nationalist discourses in the twentieth century. During my visits to Hyderabad and Thatta, I had many chances to sip tea and speak about Sind's glorious pasts with those who keep that cultural memory alive. *Chachnama* was often invoked, as were Muhammad bin Qasim and Raja Dahar. Yet three women from *Chachnama*—Dahar's wife, Queen Ladi, and Dahar's daughters Suria and Primal—carry equal weight in the cultural memory of Sind's past. Their stories are recited to explicate the nationhood of Sind and to argue against imperial aggressors (in most cases the military regime of Pakistan). These women are seen as proud, daring personifications of an ancient Sindhi nation that always resisted conquerors. In the words of the Sindhi poet Shaikh Ayaz, this comparison of their body with nationhood is stark:

Raja Dahar!
your daughters
beautiful, wise
who dragged them here
anxious, devastated
ropes around their waists
their braids dishevelled
the princesses
all naked
yes, but with heads held high
there is hatred on their face,
greatness, daring[34]

The Pakistani state, in contrast, built its narrative around the Muslim woman abducted by pirates and who cried out to Hajjaj for rescue. Pakistani historiography insisted that Muhammad bin Qasim's conquest of Sind was to avenge the defilement of that woman. The episode of "Ya Hajjaj" is pivotal and archetypal for modern Pakistan. Hence, when invoked by Faisal Shahzad, the failed bomber of Times Square, the figure of the beleaguered Muslim woman transcends history and stands for a challenge to Pakistan's masculinity and piety. This masculinity is best encapsulated by the heroic figure of Qasim, who represents the "first citizen of Pakistan." Yet, as we have seen, *Chachnama* offers a stinging denouement for Muhammad bin Qasim and for the political capital of Baghdad.

These women—whether the one who was saved by Qasim or the ones who destroyed Qasim—mark the afterlife of this text. It is clear that of the many accounts from *Chachnama*, the account of Qasim's death has sparked the most attention, the most engagement. Mahru read it for subversion, and others read it for resistance. The account, which I read as the depiction of a political subjecthood, became in historiography either an account of the destabilizing role of female sexuality or an account of resistance to the state. In these invocations, there is always the mention of a gesture—the half smile glimpsed centuries earlier. To follow this image of the half smile is to follow themes that receive little attention in contemporary Persianate historiography. It is limiting to focus exclusively on love and devotion in literary or historical male-female relationships in Persian poetics.

Just as the material remains of Bibi Jawindi's tomb in Uch Sharif testify that women have been powerful actors in history, *Chachnama* is a historical indication of the participation of elite women in world making. Yet there is no presence of women in our readings of that textual past. This reading of *Chachnama* allows us to rethink other readings of women and their occlusions in Indic pasts. Overdue is an examination of the corpus of texts that constitute our primary sources for the Persianate world to address questions of gendered power.

Let me cite just one example: the oldest Mughal building in Lahore is a tomb which has no name engraved on it.[35] The state of Punjab, which maintains the tomb, calls it the Tomb of Anarkali. Anarkali was a young slave girl in the Mughal emperor Jalaludin Akbar's court who falls in love with Prince Salim. When Akbar learns of this, he punishes the girl by having her immured. When Prince Salim becomes Emperor Jahangir, he has a tomb built in Lahore to memorialize his young love. That is the story known to millions of Lahoris—either through K. Asif's Bollywood classic *Mughal-e Azam* (1960) or through Imtiaz Ali Taj's drama from 1922. Taj, who wrote the drama in Lahore, said this about it: "My play has its basis in the stories. Since childhood, listening to the story of Anarkali created in my mind such a picture of love and passion, of failure and heartbreak, set amidst the grandeur of the Mughal harem."[36] What were the stories that surrounded Taj? Here is Syed Latif in 1892, narrating the account of Anarkali, in his book on Lahore's monuments:

> Anarkali (the pomegranate blossom), by which name the Civil Station is called, was the title given to Nadira Begam, or Sharf un-Nisa, one of the favorites of the harem of the Emperor Akbar. One day, while the Emperor was seated in an apartment lined with looking glasses, with the youthful Anarkali attending him, he saw from her reflection in the mirror that she returned Prince Salem (afterwards Jahangir) a smile. Suspecting her of a criminal intrigue with his son,

> the Emperor ordered her to be buried alive. She was accordingly placed in an upright position at the appointed place, and a wall was built round with bricks. Salem felt intense remorse at her death, and, on assuming sovereign authority, had an immense superstructure raised over her sepulcher. It is made of a block of pure marble of extraordinary beauty and exquisite workmanship. On the side is the Persian couplet composed by Jahangir, her royal paramour: Ah! Could I behold the face of my beloved once more / I would give thanks until the day of judgement.
>
> The inscription is signed Majnun Saleem Akbar. The inscription shows how passionately fond Salem had been of Anarkali, and how deeply her death had grieved him. It is the spontaneous outcome of a melancholic mind, the irrepressible outburst of an affectionate heart. The building was until lately used as the Sikh administrative offices, and later a Protestant Church.[37]

Like the memory of the two daughters of Dahar, the 1892 depiction of Anarkali focuses on a transgression between a father and son, which puts into crisis the succession to the throne. In the development of the story, the woman's transgression becomes the act in focus, not the contest between father and son. The smile links the two accounts. Scholars have pointed out that there is no basis for this story of Anarkali in Mughal chronicles. Shireen Moosavi disentangles the rumor to offer the historian's take. Moosavi names many women who may possibly be interred in the tomb.[38] Yet Moosavi's interest lies in determining the facticity of Anarkali's existence.

But what if we historians shift the focus from the fact of Anarkali's existence to the political and social landscape of the time that she represents? Returning to Moosavi then, we see a list of strong, politically powerful women who participated in the courts of Akbar and Jahangir. These women—Akbar's mother Hamida Bano, Salim's wife, Danyal's mother—who surround "Anarkali" are themselves absent as historical actors. We have no histories of their presence or of participation in the politics of the Mughal court.[39] Our scholarly attention remains on the male conqueror—whether Qasim or Firuz Shah or Babur or Akbar—and what their individual talent produced or failed to produce. The material history of Uch, like the material history of Lahore, belies this historiography.

In this chapter, I have shown that the putative conquest narrative, read instead as political theory, can offer us a gendered ethical subject who opens up the political world that surrounded the tales of conquerors of Sind's territories. In *Chachnama*, elite women exemplify its political theory—they articulate how to be just. The Brahmin women directly condemn the political corruption of the Muslim caliph, and the text recognizes their ethics as appropriate. This dialogic world of *Chachnama* was turned into an origins narrative by British colonial scribes and historians. The richness of the text disappeared under the weight of explaining the conquest of India by Islam, and the ethics and political theory enacted by women became simply "romantic" bits that could be discarded. The making of the origins narrative is the focus of the next chapter.

6

A Conquest of Pasts

A SHORT DRIVE outside of Uch, at the edges of the Cholistan desert, are seven extraordinarily long graves. Inhabitants of Uch and its environs venerate these larger-than-life graves as the final resting place of the earliest believers in Islam: the Companions of the Prophet. The marble tiles at the head of the graves denote the name of the Companion and the number of years he spent in the company of the Prophet. The graves are covered in devotional green, and their peculiar length suggests the scale of the bodies entombed.[1] In some accounts, Prophet's legendary Companion Tamim Ansari led these Companions to India (Kerala or Gujarat), and from there they came to Sind. In other accounts, it was the Companion Malik bin Dinar who built a mosque in Kerala, attracting the other Companions to India.[2]

Standing outside the shrine, I asked the caretakers and supplicants about the arrival of these Companions: what brought the Companions to Uch? What was their relationship to this land? I received different explanations. Some tied to the Prophet, some to Adam, some to Alexander the Great. Each story connected Uch to the circulations of people between the Western seaboard of India and Arabia during the early years of Islam. Some said the Companions came because Sind was the land which Adam visited after he left heaven. Adam landed in Sarandip (contemporary Sri Lanka) and then visited the Indus valley. The Companions knew to come here because they followed Adam's footsteps.

Graves of the Prophet's Companions. (Photo © Manan Ahmed Asif.)

Other stories indicated that Muhammad had prophesized that Pakistan was the future of Islam, so he dispatched his Companions to Sind. Yet others said that Zhu'l Qarnain (Alexander the Great) met the prophet Khizr while seeking the nearby Fountain of Life, and so these Companions came to that same source of life, to lay down the spiritual foundations of Uch.[3] The visitors gave proof of these stories with memories of past rains that partially collapsed a particular grave to reveal a foot unmolested by centuries underground—a miracle story. Some had had visitations in dreams from the Companions after spending forty nights in meditation and prayer near the graves. The stories of these Companions reflect the sacral beginnings in Uch's material landscape.

All of these stories narrate a Muslim presence in Uch outside of the language of conquest. So why is the only narrative of Muslim origins in India a story of the conquest of Sind?

This chapter demonstrates how colonial epistemology framed *Chachnama* as the story of the origins of Muslims in India. In this hegemonic narrative, foreign Muslims entered India as conquerors in 712 AD. Colonial officers and historians explicated Muslim origins as a narrative of conquest, positing a racialized Arab overlord against a weak Hindu subject—a subject eventually liberated by British rule.

In previous chapters, I presented the case for how and why *Chachnama* can be read as political theory and as explication of how to be an ethical subject. I examined the role of women, of advisors, and of the political and religious elite who populated the text as well as the social world of thirteenth-century Sind. *Chachnama* is, in fact, a prescription for just rule and governance in the thirteenth century. I have thus argued for an unreading of *Chachnama* from the colonial and postcolonial lens that casts dark shadows on this text. My reading of *Chachnama* foregrounds the worlds, both imagined and realized, of the thirteenth century. Those worlds were diverse and complex and built on political alliances and continuities.

Now I trace the afterlife of *Chachnama*. I present its invocation and usage in early-modern Persian historiography. I mark a critical turning point in the reinterpretation of *Chachnama* in modern colonial historiography, beginning with Alexander Dow and continuing with other Political Agents involved in the East India Company's conquest of Sind in 1843. This *longue durée* examination thus reveals how the British project to constitute radical difference in Indic pasts recast *Chachnama* and how its logic of origins determined the framing of all subsequent understandings of Muslims as foreign to India. At the end, I examine the histories of anticolonial nationalist writers who responded to this framework of Muslim origins as conquest from diverse perspectives.

Chachnama as Regional History

The life of *Chachnama* since the thirteenth century demonstrates its circulation as a history of the region of Sind and as a source for stories about the people of Sind. It is continuously invoked in other histories written between the fourteenth and eighteenth centuries in Sind. In Chapter 2, I placed *Chachnama* within the historiographical tradition of the regional regnal history, such as Beyhaqi's history of the Ghaznavid sultans. This model was in contrast to the model of the universal history of empire, such as Tabari's *Tar'ikh*, which invoked the past by stages (genealogically and then yearly), from the creation of Adam to the present political ruler. The universal-history model also carves out a geographic relationship to the arrival of Muslim political power—each history of a region begins with the arrival of the Muslims. What distinguishes *Chachnama* from the universal-history method of Arabic historiography is *Chachnama*'s geographic and temporal limitations on its imagination of the past. Like the history of Beyhaqi, *Chachnama* resists the history of polity that can be rendered on the world stage with universal time as a constant. Hence, it telescopes onto two generations of rulers and a polity that is geographically circumscribed in the region of Sind, as defined by the text itself.

It is precisely the regional focus of *Chachnama* that explains the text's absence from universal histories written in Delhi from the thirteenth century onward. We can be certain that the text was known and read, from references in Mahru and in compilations of travel accounts such as that of Ibn Batutta, who visited Uch in 1341. Outside of Sind, *Chachnama* is not cited or excerpted because it was not understood to be tied to the histories of other Muslim regnal constellations or of Islam per se.

A stronger case that *Chachnama* was not seen as a text informing the history of Islam in India is in Abu'l-Fazl's history of Mughal emperor Akbar, *Akbarnama* (the first part was completed in 1596). Humayun, unable to convince vast contingents of his elite to install him on his father Zahiruddin Babar's throne, leaves Lahore for Sind. Humayun's hope is to convince the rulers in Sind, the Jam, to give him support against Sher Shah Suri'sAfghan army in the north. Humayun is not successful in his bid, and Abu'l Fazl describes with great empathy the wanderings of Humayun's camp in the desert of Sind and Gujarat. He recounts that it was in Umarkot, Sind, that the future emperor Akbar was born. Abu'l Fazl presents the birth of the great Akbar with all the commendations that one would expect. The text opens with Akbar's birth and the heavenly portents and divine luminescence that surrounded his mother and caretakers. Abu'l-Fazl makes references to the Timurid descent of Akbar's mother and other important sacral and political leaders.[4] Yet, the text makes no mention of Muhammad bin Qasim or of Islam's history in that region.

Abu'l-Fazl had no reason to mention or utilize *Chachnama* because his purpose was to narrate from the perspective of the Mughal capital. Yet we know *Chachnama* was familiar to elite members of Akbar's court. Mir Muhammad Masum (1537–1610) was born in Bhakkar and served honorably under Akbar during Akbar's campaigns in Sind in 1592. Akbar appointed him as governor of Sind, and in 1600, Mir Masum wrote a history of Sind, now known as *Tar'ikh-i Masumi*. In this work he sought to describe the people and politics of the region. He began his history with a summary of `Ali Kufi's *Chachnama*, "which the writer of these pages reproduces without the long and tedious passages of the older texts."[5] Masum's presentation, though condensed, is true to the structure of *Chachnama* and retains the presentation of Chach as a noble conqueror and just ruler. Many of the themes from *Chachnama* are presented: Qasim's application of justice to conquered people, the resistance against the Muslim army, and the treatment of civilians. However, aspects of political theory such as the importance of advice, consultation, and alliance building are not reproduced by Masum.

As the Mughal governor of Sind, Mir Masum brought his own administrative concerns to his interpretation of *Chachnama*. His motive in writing was to present a history of the local elite, showing the status of various communities and families in Sind. Masum used *Chachnama* to establish a political hierarchy of loyal or suspect populations under his governance. He cited *Chachnama* to assert that "the first tribe from the nations of Sind who became Muslim was the *chanah* tribe."[6] In Masum's telling, the people converted after observing Qasim leading his army in prayer and then seeing him dine without any restrictions of caste or rank. This episode, given on the authority of *Chachnama*, was purely a construct of Masum and demonstrates the utility of *Chachnama* in shaping local politics.

Masum goes on to trace the early history of the Samma people of Sind and to place them in the role of the Jat of *Chachnama*—a lower caste needing to be monitored. Masum, as a Mughal officer administering a recalcitrant province, uses *Chachnama* to reorient claims of genealogical importance and significance in Sind. There are other intriguing changes in Masum's interpretation: Muhammad bin Qasim does demolish the temple at Daybul but does not build a mosque there, the caliph is not as licentious, and the two daughters of Dahar are not immured but are dragged from the tails of horses around the four corners of the city and then thrown into the Euphrates. These modifications hint at other political concerns facing Akbar, with the emphasis on being responsive to the Mughal center and on rewarding service to the throne.

The next major citation for *Chachnama* is in Mir Ali Sher Qani's (1727–1788) *Tuhfat ul-Kiram* (Gifts of the Generous)—a social history of Sind.[7] Qaniʿ incorporates *Chachnama* in the beginning of his account, highlighting the social and moral aspects of the text. Qaniʿ is faithful to the narrative of *Chachnama*, providing detailed summaries of episodes and their participants. His is a social history of eighteenth-century Sind, and he remarks on contemporary social practices—including the description of yogic poses for ascetics that he says were introduced in *Chachnama*'s description of Muhammad bin Qasim praying. In *Tuhfat ul-Kiram*, Qani's Qasim marries Dahar's sister. He permits the inhabitants of Brahmanabad to build a new temple, gives orders to formalize their ascetic status, and forgives them the *jizya* tax. Qasim builds mosques alongside the temples. In his depiction of Qasim's religiosity and piety, Qaniʿ emphasizes Qasim's deference to the holy sites and his extended meditative prayers. Qaniʿ declares that after the conquest of Daybul, Qasim leads the Muslim army in three days of prayer and recital of the Qur'an. These are acts of meditation quite common among Sufi ascetics. Where Masum repurposes *Chachnama* for political control, Qaniʿ imbues it with sacral and cultural hues. Where Masum focuses on local administration, Qaniʿ focuses on the question of accommodation and cohabitation in *Chachnama*. What is remarkable that Qani's late-eighteenth-century Persian interpretation of *Chachnama* as political theory is contemporary with the markedly different interpretation of the East India Company that I describe later.

From the Local to the Universal

The histories of Masum and Qaniʿ incorporate *Chachnama* and reflect the political and cultural demands of a localized history. As noted with the case of *Akbarnama*, no universal histories prior to the seventeenth century incorporated or cited *Chachnama*. The first history of

India to cite *Chachnama* was Muhammad Qasim Astrabadi (Firishta)'s *Gulsham-i Ibrahimi/Tar'ikh*, written between 1606 and 1616.[8] As a history of the regions of India commissioned by the sultan of Bijapur in the Deccan (Ibrahim Adil Shah), Firishta's history would soon become the most important text ever written on the Muslim past in South Asia. Firishta prefaces his text with a summary of *Mahabharata*, which he presents as a sacral and political history of India. He notes the translation of years and places of birth but indicates that Muslim accounts of the world had a different temporal regime.[9] From a history of non-Muslim India, he transitions to the political rise of Muslims, which he locates in Lahore, not Sind. It is thus Lahore, as a seat of Ghazanvid power, to which Firishta dedicates his first chapter. He only notes that at some point in the tenth century, the descendants of Qasim's campaign in Sind met the descendants of Arab campaigns in Lahore.

The bulk of Firishta's history is divided first according to region and then time, from the tenth century to his present. He covers each region—Gujarat, Delhi, Deccan, Bengal, Kashmir, and so on—with accounts of elite politics, courtly intrigue, love, and justice or injustice for each year. Firishta considers Sind to be a region of limited consequence, and he notes that its historical sources are scant.[10] It is in the eighth of his nine chapters that Firishta covers *Chachnama* as a history of Sind. Firishta notes first that the region had, since the time of Adam, been in contact with Arabia and that many Brahmins visited Mecca before and after the birth of Islam.[11] The close contact meant that a significant Muslim community existed in Sind before Hajjaj bin Yusuf sent troops to the region in 712 CE. The majority of Firishta's account is taken from Baladhuri. His history does not mention Chach but does reproduce some of the stories from *Chachnama*. For example, Firishta concludes with the account of Dahar's daughters and the death of Qasim in a truncated form. However, he does not mention any detail about their punishment for causing Qasim's death. The history of Sind, he concludes, is not contained in any reliable account after *Chachnama*.

Firishta produces a series of genealogies for Muslims in India—building from *Mahabarata*, to asserting trade and settlements from

Arabia, to histories of campaigns from Persia. Firishta advances a claim of the prehistory of India and links the history of Islam to that of Persia rather than of Arabia. The early conquests are not described in any great detail but are simply noted as traditions of the past. For Firishta, there is little reason to look closely at the history of Sind except to mark the campaign of Qasim. Islam had, for him, multiple venues of arrival in India, whether through conversions during the life of the Prophet or through later campaigns from Iran and Afghanistan.

Firishta's history of the regions of India and of Muslim rule entered Europe in the late eighteenth century. From it, Europeans excavated a list of primary sources on Muslim political history, most significantly *Chachnama*. Firishta's history of regions of India, in its translations and transcreations, became the locus of nineteenth-century colonial knowledge about Muslim history in India. The story of the movement of Firishta from the Deccan to London, and the subsequent rearrangement of its contents, is the story of the making of the Muslim origins narrative.

Alexander Dow (1735–1779), an employee of the East India Company, took Firishta's history to England and produced a summary as a translation in 1768. In Dow's preface to his text, he states that a history of the entire Indian subcontinent and of the "Mahommedan empire in India" had been up to that moment "concealed in the obscurity of the Persian."[12] Dow's translation was thus an unveiling of a history that was necessary for the East India Company's project of imperial and colonial domination in India. In making his selections or summaries of Firishta's text, Dow categorically asserts that Muslim rule in India was predicated on a politics of making Hindu subjects invisible. In his preface, he dismisses Firishta's introduction with a summary from the *Mahabharata* as "a performance of fancy": "The prejudices of the Mahommedans against the followers of the Brahmin religion, seldom permit them to speak with common candour of the Hindoos. It swayed very much with Ferishta when he affirmed, that there is no history among the Hindoos of better authority than the Mahabarit. That work is a poem and not a history."[13] Put more clearly, Dow argued that if the Muslim author had included a Hindu text, it was only to demonstrate its weakness as history. This assertion of categorical difference between the Hindu subjects and the Muslim rulers was put starkly by Dow: Firishta's history provides "us with a striking picture of the deplorable condition of a people subjected to arbitrary sway; and of the instability of empire itself, when it is founded neither upon laws, nor upon the opinions and attachments of mankind."[14] Dow identifies a clear distinction between the Muslims and Hindus. The latter, he writes, "give themselves up to tyranny after tyranny," offering no resistance.

In his second edition, produced in 1772, Dow added a "Dissertation concerning the Origin and Nature of Despotism in Hindostan." In this edition Dow rearranges Firishta to chronologically place the Muslim arrival in Sind at the forefront of Islam's origins in India. In his effort to explain the figure of the Oriental Despot, Dow places the Mughal rule in the tradition of an Islam which is uniquely suited to conquest, for it is in the very nature of its believers to conquer and to kill: "The faith of Mahomed is peculiarly calculated for despotism" and when enshrined in a state "leaves ample room for the cruelty."[15] This cruelty was faced by the Hindu Brahmins who were "mild, humane, obedient, and most industrious, they are of all nations on earth the most easily conquered and governed."[16]

The East India Company, looking to produce an empire in India, was an ideal audience for such an assertion of difference between Hindus and Muslims. Dow's *History* became one of Europe's most celebrated and widely circulated volumes on the Muslim history of India, with French and German editions published in 1769 and 1773. This story of Islam's despotism over the Hindus became the theoretical framework for how the Indian past was written in the nineteenth century. James Mill's 1817 *History of British India* drew upon Dow to argue for a tripartite division of Indian pasts and established the arrival of Islam as a fundamental rupture in that history. Mill posited a golden age of ancient Hindu India, which was interrupted and arrested by the dark age of medieval Muslim rule and followed by the enlightened, civilized, liberated rule of the British. This conception of the origins of Islam in India became foundational for the East India Company's policies for knowledge gathering and territorial acquisition.

A History of the Conquest of Sind

In 1843, the East India Company conquered Sind. The decisive battle was fought in Uch. The campaign for the mapping of the Indus River and for control over Sind took Dow's framework and excavated *Chachnama* as the central text of Muslim conquest to understand Sind. The Company's military and political conquest was first a conquest of the history of Sind. It was built upon production of layers of colonial narratives of difference and arguing for fundamental conflict between Muslims and non-Muslims in Sind. Ultimately, this history was packaged with an emancipatory message in which the British were putative liberators of the long-suffering Hindus of Sind. It is this moment of the British conquest of Sind—politically and historiographically—*Chachnama* becomes a conquest narrative. That is, it becomes a justification for the nineteenth-century British conquest.

The annexation of Sind, in itself, is a remarkable account of the varied teleologies of colonialism in India. As one of the last military acquisitions of the Company, the annexation preserves a documentary history of the power and knowledge complex at the heart of the colonialist project. Sind had a long gestation in the Company's imagination; some of the Company's earliest concerns were with competition from Sindhi as well as Portuguese and Dutch merchants. The Company had established a factory in Thatta in 1758 that was abandoned in 1775. However, the Napoleonic invasion of Egypt in 1798 and the posting of a French emissary in Persia in 1806, as well as the fear of Russian aggression, forced the Company to turn its attention to Sind.[17] As Company officials awoke to the political importance of Sind, they began to compile historical, anthropological, cartographic, and geological data on the "people of Scinde."

Now let me narrate the political history of how Sind entered British control and how the British colonial authorities created narratives about Hindu enslavement and Muslim despotism to both justify and explain their particular conquest. In 1800, Nathan Crow was sent from Bombay to the court of the Talpur Mirs—rulers of Sind—to sign a treaty that would exclude all Europeans and Americans from Sind.[18] In his correspondence, he notes that Sind would serve as an excellent bulwark not only against France and Russia but also against Afghanistan, the Marathas, and Ranjit Singh in Lahore. The Talpurs, wary of foreign troops on their land, signed the treaty to keep the Company at bay for a while. In 1809, another treaty was negotiated to "prevent any establishment of the tribe of French in Sind" and again, in 1820, to further restrict the settlement of any "Europeans or Americans" in the region.[19] The desire to chart the waters of the Indus brought Alexander Burnes (1805–1841) to the port of Karachi in 1830. His ostensible mission was to deliver presents from the king of England to Raja Ranjit Singh. After some hesitation, the Talpur gave him permission to navigate the river to Lahore.

Burnes notes that as he ascended the river, a local elite ("Syud") turned to his companion and said, "Sinde is now gone, since the English have seen the river, which is the road to its conquest." Hearing that, Burnes commented, "If such an event do happen, I am certain that the body of people will hail the happy day; but it will be an evil one for the Syuds, the descendants of Mahomed, who are the only people, besides the rulers that derive precedence and profit from the existing order of things."[20] Burnes's voyage ended up opening the channels of the Indus to the Company. The British capitalized on this opening and forced more commercial treaties. One in 1832, and another in 1834, allowed British passage across Sind, taxation on commerce along the Indus, and the use of Karachi's harbors. Sind, the frontier, became a necessary shortcut to the wars in Afghanistan and Punjab. In addition to such concerns, the East India Company was apprehensive that the Indus was being used to supply Malwa opium to the Portuguese harbors of Daman and Diu in Gujarat, by way of the Karachi harbor. These routes had to be stopped or, at the very least, taxed.

In 1839, more treaties followed. These increased the number of British troops in Sind, abrogated all foreign affairs of the Talpur in favor of the British, put an annual tax on the Talpur, and gave the British the authority to mint coins (with the Queen's visage) in Sind. In the meantime, Admiral Maitland captured the port of Karachi on the pretense that someone had fired a cannon shot at his frigate while it was in the harbor. The capture of Karachi, a major port of commerce, was a severe blow to the Talpur. They did not have many options left. The failed British campaign in Afghanistan (the first Anglo-Afghan war) necessitated troop movements across the Talpur territory, and any misstep could have easily made the Talpur a target. Although their previous alliances with the emir in Kabul had long since deteriorated, the Company grew suspicious that the Talpur were now in secret communications with the Afghan king, Dost Muhammad.

The Anglo-Afghan war was a stinging defeat for the new governor general of the Company, Lord Edward Law Ellenborough (1790–1871). Ellenborough dramatically brought back the "gates of Somnath" from Kabul to mark that Company rule in India was to counter Muslim tyranny. His declaration of 1842 to "all Princes and Chiefs and People of India" announced that the return of the spoiled remains of the temple of Somnath to India avenged "the insult of 800 years. . . . The gates of the temple of Somanath, so long the memorial of your humiliation, are become the proudest record of your national glory."[21]

Ellenborough expanded the efforts to capture Sind and in 1842 appointed a new commander of Company troops, Sir Charles Napier (1782–1853). Neither of these men seemed comfortable with the status quo in Sind. Ellenborough was eager to take over the commercial concerns of the Indus delta and was unhappy with the Talpur's lack of control over the activities of pirates and rogue traders (that is, Portuguese traders) on the channels. Napier, a veteran military commander of imperial wars in Europe and self-described victim of fool-hardy politicians, had arrived in India convinced that the Company had lost its moorings in India, becoming beholden to commerce and shying away from their Godly mission. A deeply religious man, Napier saw the liberation of Sind from its despotic Muslim rulers as his Christian duty, with the added benefit that achieving his goal would demonstrate his brilliance as a tactical commander:

> I made up my mind that although war had not been declared (nor is it necessary to declare it), I would at once march upon Imanguth and prove to the whole Talpur family of both Khyrpor and Hyderabad that neither their deserts, nor their negotiations can protect them from the British troops. The Ameers will fly over the Indus, and we shall become masters of the left bank of the river from Mitenkote to the mouth; peace with civilization will then replace war and barbarism. My conscience will be light, for I see no wrong in so regulating a set of tyrants who are themselves invaders, and have in sixty years nearly destroyed the country. The people hate them.[22]

Napier, who did not know a speck of Persian or Sindhi or Hindustani, continuously cast aspersions on the truthfulness of treaties signed by the Sindhi rulers, finding ways of dismissing them from official records.[23] He had already concluded that the Talpur were the "greatest ruffians," "imbeciles," possessing "zenanas filled with young girls torn from their friends, and treated when in the hareem with revolting barbarity," and even prone to enjoying the occasional "human sacrifice." Honoring agreements with the Talpur was highly unnecessary.[24]

On 17 February 1843, Napier defeated the assembled troops of the Talpur at Miani and annexed Sind to the Company. Initially, the conquest was hailed as a heroic return of an East India Company long floundering in bureaucratic miasma. Some even claimed that "since Clive's glorious victory at Plassey there has been nothing achieved by native or European troops in India at all to compare to it."[25] But soon the annexation sparked intense debate in India and in England as reports surfaced that Napier had behaved ignobly against the Talpur and that Ellenborough had exaggerated the contribution of opium revenue from its travel down the Indus.[26] The political agents stationed in Sind—Outram, Eastwick and Pottinger—publicly derided the unilateral actions of Napier, arguing that his actions were against the best interests of the Company. Inquiries were set in motion against Ellenborough and Napier. Parliament called upon the General Court of Directors of the East India Company to resolve the "uncalled-for, impolitic and unjust" invasion of Sind. Ellenborough was recalled, and while Napier remained as ruler of Sind for a short while, he had to fight for his reputation in India and at home.[27] Governed through the Bombay Presidency, Sind remained an administrative challenge for the British after the annexation.

Origins of Islam in India

The British conquest of Sind was not simply a political act. It was an epistemological project based on the efforts of collection and translation by a group of young Orientalists, philologists, archeologists, and ethnographers who followed Dow. They excavated *Chachnama* as testament to originary "Mohamedan conquest."[28] The Company's own conquest of Sind was cast as a corrective to the Muslim conquest—a move to proclaim the emancipation of Hindus from the clutches of the foreign Muslims. This knowledge-making imperial project relied on the discovery and utilization of *Chachnama*. Though Dow had indicated Firishta's dependence on *Chachnama*, generation of Company officials did the work of locating, translating, and annotating the text. The earliest comment on *Chachnama* by a Company official is from Captain James McMurdo, who traveled the Indus River in 1812. Later, Lieutenant Thomas Postans and his colleague Richard F. Burton translated parts of *Chachnama* in their respective travelogues and histories. This material was then used by Company historian Mountstuart Elphinstone in his 1841 *History of India: The Hindu and Mohametan Periods*. Then Henry Miers Elliot, in his *The History of India, as Told by Its Own Historians*, translated major portions of the text, which were used by subsequent historians such as Vincent A. Smith and Stanley Lane-Poole to compose universal histories of India by the early twentieth century. In the colonial historiography, *Chachnama* appears markedly different than the regional history that was interpreted by Masum and Qaniʿ in early-modern Sind. *Chachnama* goes from a text about a political theory of rule or social coexistence to one selectively interpreted to represent Muslim tyranny, temple destruction, and forced conversions.

Captain James McMurdo (1785–1820), a political agent for the Company, surveyed Sind and Uch in the 1810s and wrote the earliest history of the region, utilizing the beginning of Qani's *Tuhfat ul-Kiram*. McMurdo argued that the Sindhi rulers had "treachery as a national vice" and that the Talpurs had no zeal greater than "propagating the faith."[29] The sketch of regional history that he provided his audience was harsh, marking each period of Muslim rule (starting with Qasim) as yet another dark age for Hindu subjects. He wrote of a natural schism between Hindus and Muslims, hoping that the vanquished Hindus would act as natural allies for the British. He portrayed the Muslims as "the most bigoted, the most self-sufficient, and the most ignorant people on record." These bigoted Muslims, McMurdo asserted, had so long dominated the Hindus as to change their very character:

> How different is the picture which Sindh presents! In the course of a thousand years there is not an instance of a Hindu having attempted to rescue himself or fellow-countrymen from a state of vilest slavery; nor, since the fall of the Hindu dynasty, has any aboriginal native of

> the province raised himself to independence. [. . .] The original Hindu tribes who were lords of the soil are all now ranged under the faith of Muhammed, or have become assimilated to his followers.[30]

Although McMurdo died of cholera, his posthumous papers were published in 1834 alongside the work of another young political agent, Thomas Postans (1808–1846), who continued writing on the original conquest of Sind by the Muslims. His account, incorporating selections from *Chachnama*, was published in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal* in 1838. He later expanded his translations of *Chachnama* in his *Personal Observations on Scinde*, published in 1843. He referred to *Chachnama* as the "principal Persian manuscript authority consulted in the history of Sind." For him, *Chachnama* was a record of centuries of Muslim barbarity:

> Sind . . . under its Hindu possessors was a rich, flourishing, and extensive monarchy, but that, subsequently becoming the prey of conquerors, who, paid no attention to the improvement of the country or maintenance of the imperial authority, this valuable territory dwindled at length into waste. . . . All the peculiarities and unsullied pride of caste, which distinguishes the Hindu under his own or British government, has been completely lost in Sind. In India we have seen the dormant spirit of an injured people rousing itself to retributive vengeance, flinging off the yoke of Islam, regaining their monarchies, and making the bigoted Moslem tremble at the Pagan's power; but in Sind oppression has rooted out all patriotism, and the broken spirited Hindu becomes a helpless servant to his Moslem tyrant, and willing inducer of his own extreme degradation.[31]

The portrait of Qasim that emerges in Postans's work focuses on his habit of "converting the Pagan temples into mosques and places of Mohammedan prayer." His destruction of the temple at Daybul "occasioned a general despondency throughout the country."[32] After the killing of Dahir, "as usual, mosques were erected on the ruins of the temples, or those places were transformed for purposes of Mohammedan worship."[33]

Postans was not the only subordinate of Charles Napier traveling across Sind. The hills of Thatta were also the training grounds for perhaps the greatest Orientalist translator and explorer, Richard F. Burton

(1821–1890). In 1842, a very young Burton was assigned to Sind as a regimental interpreter, ending up as the personal attaché of Charles Napier. He produced three volumes on his time in Sind: *Scinde, or the Unhappy Valley* (1851), *Scinde, and the Races that Inhabit the Valley of the Indus* (1851), and *Falconry in the Valley of Indus* (1853). Burton relied on Postans's descriptions from *Chachnama*, but it is likely that he was in possession of a full manuscript. In his construction, again, Sind was a paradise before the Muslim arrival:

> It is related by the chronicles of antiquity, that in days gone by, and ages that have long fled, Scinde was a most lovely land situated in a delightful climate, with large, flourishing, and populous cities; orchards producing every kind of tree and fruit. It was governed by a powerful monarch who had mighty horses and impregnable forts, whose counsellors were renowned for craft, and whose commanders celebrated for conduct. And the boundaries of his dominions and provinces extended as far as Kanoj and Cashmere, upon whose south-western frontier one of the Rahis planted two towering cypresses. During the caliphate of the Chief of True Believers, Umar son of Khattab, it was resolved, with the permission of Allah, to subject the sinners of Scinde to the scimitar of certain sturdy saints militant.[34]

The project began by Alexander Dow would find no better exposition than Burton's depiction of this ill-fortuned land. Burton posited a paradise of ancient Sind, destroyed by the fanaticism of the marauding Muslims, resulting in the arrival of the long dark ages. The region waited even longer than Bengal, for instance, for its emancipation. Burton's rewriting of Muslim history went further, emphasizing in tremendous detail the ancient wartime atrocities allegedly committed by Muslims against Hindus. In particular, Burton mixed various episodes from *Chachnama* to give an account of the fall of the city of Daybul to the Arab armies and to denote how Muslims dealt with the Hindus:

> Thus was Dewal lost and won. For three days there was a general massacre of the inhabitants. The victors then brought out the Moslem prisoners, and captured immense property and treasures. Before throwing down the pagoda, and substituting the mosque and the minaret in its stead, Mahommed bin Kasim, ordering the attendance of the Brahmans, entered the temple and bade them show him the deity they adored. A well-formed figure of a man on horseback

> being pointed out to him, he drew his sabre to strike it, when one of the priests cried, 'it is an idol and not a living being!' Then advancing towards the statue, the Moslem removed his mailed gauntlet, and placing it upon the hand of the image, said to the by-standers, 'See, this idol hath but one glove, ask him what he hath done with the other?' They replied, 'What should a stone know of these things?'
>
> Whereupon Mahommed bin Kasim, rebuking them, rejoined, 'verily, yours is a curious object of worship, who knows nothing, even about himself'. He then directed that the Brahmans, to distinguish them from other Hindoos, should carry in their hands a small vessel of grain, as mendicants, and should beg from door to door every morning; after which he established a governor at Dewal, and, having satisfactorily arranged affairs in that quarter, embarked his machines of war in boats, sent them up the river to Nirunkot, and proceeded with his army by land in the same direction.[35]

Muhammad bin Qasim in Burton's narrative does not inhabit a history separate from the long histories of Muslim invaders. He is, if anything, a distillation of the very essence of Muslim oppression. Burton links Muhammad bin Qasim to the long line of Arab Muslim conquerors in order to bring into sharp focus their outsider status and the rupture they caused with Sind's native past. In this mode of translation, the most significant theme of the history of Qasim is the disruption of the distinct, proud, and independent nation of Sindhis. Pegged against the violence of the fall of Daybul ("for three days there was a general massacre of the inhabitants"), is the curious episode of flesh meeting stone. In Burton's rendering, Muhammad bin Qasim's encounter with the idol has no equivalent; there is no understanding, and the result is a particular policy of discrimination. Burton is thus able to assert a long history of difference in Sind, illustrating the need for colonial intervention. This is the most important turn in the history of these narratives. These reframings of *Chachnama* by the colonial agents McMurdo, Postans, and Burton were put to political use by the East India Company.

There can be no doubt that there is an explicit and immediate link between the narratives of Sind's past in Postans and Burton, and Charles Napier's casting of himself as the liberator of Sindhi people. Napier repeatedly used the argument of Muslim brutality in the pasts of Sind to paint the current Talpurs as usurpers, with "their stupid policy to injure agriculture, to check commerce, to oppress the working man, and to accumulate riches for their own sensual pleasures."[36] The oppression narrative of a Hindu majority seething under a Muslim minority was so entrenched within the Company's productions of Sind's past that it flattened out the histories of this region, calcifying *Chachnama*'s diverse world representation under one overarching symbol: temple destruction.

James Mill (1773–1836) finished his *The History of British India* in 1817, and it quickly became a hegemonic text on Indian pasts. As such, it projected his radical utilitarianism onto a static ancient India.[37] While it remained required reading at East India College at Haileybury, it was augmented by works produced by former and current Company officials who filled Mill's constructs with new and robust regional detail. These writers included Mountstuart Elphinstone, Vincent A. Smith, and Stanley Lane-Poole.

Elphinstone (1779–1859) began his administrative career with the Marathas in Poona and deliberately set out to offer a corrective to Mill's *History*—one which was "under the guidance of impressions received in India."[38] His *History of India: The Hindu and Mahometan Periods* was completed in 1841. Elphinstone situated the Muslim urge to conquer in the "fanaticism of the false prophet," and *Chachnama* was the originary source that documented communal strife and warfare among Hindus and Muslims. He found that "though loaded with tedious speeches, and letters ascribed to the principal actors, it contains a minute and consistent account of the transactions during Mohammed Casim's invasion."[39] For Elphinstone, Qasim was "prudent and conciliating" but caught between the Muslim habits of "ferocity and moderation." For example, Elphinstone narrated Qasim's cruelty when taking Daybul: "Casim at first contented himself with circumcising all the Brahmins; but, incensed at their rejection of this sort of conversion, he ordered all above the age of seventeen to be put to death, and all under it, with the women, to be reduced to slavery."[40] Elphinstone highlighted contrasts to Muslim barbarity in the bravery of the local resistance, starting with Dahar, who, "already wounded with an arrow, mounted his horse and renewed the battle with unabated courage, he was unable to restore the fortune of the day and fell fighting gallantly in the midst of the Arabian cavalry."[41] Of the fall of Brahmanabad, Elphinstone narrated the "masculine spirit of his [Dahar's] widow," who marshaled the defenses of the city and, when left with no hope of survival, perished in "flames of their [the women] own kindling."[42]

Chachnama was for Elphinstone a particularly trenchant example of the injustices of Muslim pasts in India. While within the greater narrative of Muslim despots and temple destroyers, Muhammad bin Qasim did not merit the same attention as the raiders of Somnath, he importantly represented the *earliest* fissure in the history of India. Against the backdrop of this history, Elphinstone could raise significant questions about the nature of conquest and resistance. Why, Elphinstone wondered, did the Arabs fail to take over India as they had Iran, Syria, and Iraq? His analysis hinged on the resistance to conversion offered by the "complex" priestly classes of India; a lack of such a structure had doomed the rather simplistic theologies of Zoroastrian Iran.

While Elphinstone's text was offering a summary and judgment of *Chachnama*, the ancient text was just making its debut in English through Henry Miers Elliot (1808–1853). Elliot, a Company official in the Revenue Department (and later Foreign Department) spent the majority of his posting in the environs of Delhi.[43] In 1847, he began working with Aloys Sprenger, the principal of Mohammadan College in Delhi, to compile a register of Persian histories of the Muslim past for administrative as well as research purposes. He first began his compendium as a bibliographic index, published in 1849. The first volume of excerpted and translated Persian histories into English was *Arabs in Sind*, which was published right after his death in 1853. Eventually, these "raw materials" for a study of India, comprising translated excerpts from 231 Arabic and Persian histories of India, were published by John Dowson in 1867–1877. These comprised the eight volumes of *History of India as Told by Its Own Historians*. Elliot had fervent hope that his massive manuscript collection and translation project would result in a time "when the full light of European truth and discernment begins to shed its beams upon the obscurity of the past, and to relieve us from the necessity of appealing to the Native Chroniclers of the time, who are, for the most part dull, prejudiced, ignorant and superficial."[44] However, Elliot's agenda was not only to bring to "light" the histories of Muslims and provide a much needed distance from the native informant but also to give voice to hitherto silenced populations—the native Hindus of India. It was his hope that the Hindus could finally provide "the thoughts, emotions, and raptures which a long oppressed race might be supposed to give vent to, when freed from the tyranny of its former masters.[45]

In Elliot's presentation of Muslim pasts, *Chachnama* was the central text which explicated the origins of Islam in India. Elliot's chosen excerpts from *Chachnama* were the first history presented, and their placement ensured their hegemonic status for the next 150 years. He remarks in his preface that "an air of truth pervades the whole" of *Chachnama*. Elliot wrote a brief introduction to *Chachnama* in his published translation. In this he commented only on the episode of Qasim's death. He called it "novel, and not beyond the bounds of probability, when we consider the blind obedience which at that time was paid to the mandates of the Prophet's successor, of which, at a later period, we have so many instances in the history of the Assassins, all inspired by the same feeling, and executed in the same hope."[46] He reads the ethical critique offered in *Chachnama* as a historical indictment of the perversion at the heart of the Muslim imperium. His views have long remained out of examination, since his own writings were not found or published until after his death, but it is imperative to examine Elliot's own take on *Chachnama* in his brief note titled "*The advances of Arabs towards Sind.*"

That note of Elliot, produced as an appendix, relied on Firishta and *Chachnama* to illustrate the ignominy of the Muslim invaders: "Scarcely had Muhammad expired, when his followers and disciples, issued from their naked deserts . . . terror and devastation, murder and rapine, accompanied their progress, in fulfillment of the prophetic denunciation of Daniel, that this descendant of Ishmael 'shall destroy wonderfully. . . .'"[47] Qasim, in Elliot's estimation, was one of the "better" invaders who partook in "much less, wanton sacrifice of life than was freely indulged in by most of the ruthless bigots who have propagated the same faith elsewhere."[48] This "unwonted toleration" on Qasim's part may have "arisen from the small number of the invading force, as well as from ignorance of civil institutions," but it still resulted in the wanton destruction of temples and massacres of civilians. Elliot reflected on the historical question that was quoted almost verbatim by Cousens forty years later: "It is impossible for the traveler to wander through [Sind] without being struck with the absence of all record of [Arab] occupation. In language, architecture, arts, traditions, customs, and manners, they have left but little impress upon the country or the people. We trace them, like the savage Sikhs, only in the ruins of their predecessors."[49] The answer, for Elliot, was that Arab memory and Arab material traces were destroyed by their own internecine fighting; they "showed themselves as utterly incapable as the shifting sands of their own desert, of coalescing into a system of concord and subordination."[50] The masses of Sindhi Hindus were left to fend for themselves, for there never was any "sympathy between the conquerors and the conquered." Elliot's hope was that "the inhabitants of modern India, as well as our clamorous demagogues at home" remember "the very depth of degradation from which the great mass of the people have been raised, under the protection of British supremacy."[51]

Elliot was widely successful in positing the conquest origins of Islam in India and placing the fanatic Muslims and the feminized Hindus as the two protagonists at the forefront of colonial and nationalist scholarship on the Indian past. The result of the translation project was the incorporation of *Chachnama* as the epitome of Muslim foreignness into newer grand histories of India. It also turned the project into a pedagogic one. Vincent A. Smith (1848–1920) and Stanley Lane-Poole (1854–1931) wrote two major histories of India which were incorporated into curriculum in both India and Britain. These histories were the foundation of civil service exams, providing the framework for the nationalist critique of colonial historiography. In these histories, 712 AD became a totemic date for the rupture of the Indian past and the framework of the foreign origins hegemony.[52] Lane-Poole's *Medieval India under Muhammadan Rule, 712–1764* (1903) defined the medieval period under his study thus: "It begins when the immemorial systems, rule, and customs of Ancient India were invaded, subdued, and modified by a succession of foreign conquerors who imposed a new rule and introduced an exotic creed, strange languages and a foreign art."[53] Lane-Poole recommends that the readers of his popular history consult Elliot's translations of key texts, such as *Chachnama*, to grow their own knowledge. Then he goes on to describe the "adventures" of Mohammad Qasim as "one of the romances of history."[54] Like Lane-Poole's book, Smith's *The Oxford Student's History of India* (1908) was designed for Calcutta University and Oxford University. To answer the questions about "Hindu civilization on the eve of the Mohamedan conquest," Smith offers the story of the Arab conquerors who "invaded Sind, slew the reigning king, Dāhir, son of Chach, and established a Muslim state which endured for centuries."[55] These histories were foundational to a vast educational enterprise, lasting for dozen of editions throughout the 1920s and 1930s. In critical ways, their frameworks remains dominant.

Two-Nation History

Where Elliot's translation project fractured Persian histories into chunks suitable for historical inquiry into one sectarian past alone, the "connected" history projects of Smith and Lane-Poole reknit them into an overwhelmingly powerful narrative. The Muslims, pegged as outsiders and conquerors in the Indian past, were the fanatic outsiders of the British colonial present as well. *Chachnama* and the designation of 712 AD as the year of the conquest cemented the content and the temporality of British history for India. In this historiography, two central assumptions were made about the text: first, that its primary value was as a source for Islam's eighth-century origins in India because it was a translation of an earlier Arabic history, and second, that empirical facts and dates were to be recovered from the romantic gibberish clotting the text. Any and all colonial productions about the Muslim past in India naturalized this hegemonic framework.

From the early twentieth century, Indian historians trained at Calcutta University, at Aligarh University, at Baroda University, and at Osmania University struggled to come to terms with this narrative. Their effort to narrate a nationalist, anticolonial history was also the struggle to engage with the narrative of Muslim despotism, temple destruction, and the question of foreigners in India. In the records of history journals like *Calcutta Review, Muslim Review, Islamic Culture,* and *Indian Historical Review,* they investigated the question of the origins of Islam and its fate in India. R. C. Majumdar (1888–1980), U. M. Daudpota (1897–1958), Muhammad Habib (1895–1971), Shibli Naumani (1857–1914), Jadunath Sarkar (1870–1958), Sulaiman Nadvi (1884–1953), S. M. Ikram (1908–1973), and Nabi Baksh Khan Baloch (1917–2011) were key figures in the nationalist responses to this colonial historiography.

The framework of *Chachnama* as a conquest narrative and history of the eighth century dominated their efforts, though their response to the framework varied substantially. For people like Majumdar and Sarkar, the colonial judgment of the despotic Muslim conqueror was reinforced; for Habib and Ikram, *Chachnama* had to be carefully read to potentially recuperate this earliest conquest from the colonial verdict of Muslim vilification; for Daudpota and Baloch, the entirety of the text needed to be recovered, retranslated, and then situated as a regional history of the origins of Islam in Sind; for Naumani and Nadvi, Muslims in Sind had to be placed nearer to the time of the Prophet to make the question of origins a social one, not one based on conquest.

In the scholarship of nationalist historians such as Jadunath Sarkar and R. C. Majumdar,the figure of the outsider Muslim loomed large. Sarkar's lectures on Indian pasts—as well as his histories of Mughal India—took their cue from colonial historians and argued that the "foreign immigrant" Muslim conquest of India differed fundamentally from all preceding invasions" because of Islam's "fiercely monotheistic nature."[56] Sarkar's study of the Muslim past incorporated Elliot's framework, where the communities were historically, conceptually, socially, and religiously separated. Similarly, R. C. Majumdar's treatment "Arab Conquest of Sind" presented Muslims as conquering Spain and Hindus as resisting Europeans. Majumdar depicted Muslims as natural conquerors who "inevitab[ly]" cast their covetous eyes on India."[57] *Chachnama* contained "a kernel of historical facts," which Majumdar could augment via archaeological and textual sources to present the account of the eighth-century invasion.[58]

In contrast was a set of Muslim intellectuals who looked at the origins of Indian Muslims. This generation of scholars emphasized Islam's history in Arabia and the connections among Arabia and India and Sufi genealogies of Indic thought. The Muslim historian and educationist Shibli Naumani studied under T. W. Arnold at Aligarh Muslim University. He began to work on the history of early Islam as a response to Orientalist historians such as David Samuel Margoliouth at Oxford.

Naumani focused on the biography of the Prophet Muhammad and key figures in early Islam. Between 1882 and 1898, he produced a wide variety of historical essays on science, medicine, arts, and the Muslim state in early-modern India. These essays were a sharp rebuke to both British and Hindu historians, presenting a history of Muslims in India not as foreigners and conquerors but as belonging to India. However, it was Naumani's student Sulaiman Nadvi who turned his attention on Sind and on *Chachnama.*

Alongside Naumani, Nadvi founded the Society to Correct Errors in Histories (*Anjuman Islah Aghlat Tar'ikhi*) at Aligarh in 1910. He published a number of essays on the early history of Muslims in India—most importantly *Indo-Arab Relations* (1929), which focused on maritime and migratory contacts between Arab Muslims and India. In 1947, his two-volume study *Tarikh-i Sind* was published. The work detailed a social and political history of Muslims in Sind from the early eighth century to the fourteenth. Nadvi consulted numismatic, epigraphic, and textual evidence to present Sind as a landscape teeming with life and culture. His preface addressed the British historians directly:

> Rare are the histories of India written by the English which are free of political bias. Their purpose is to spread distrust between the Hindus and Muslims; to cause the Muslims to degrade their feelings about their own past in this country; and to valorize the British state. In these English histories, there is much confusion for Muslim readers, and small details are made into paradigms of hate. These histories have entered the school curriculum and shape the minds of children such that even Indian historians are reproducing these biases and mistakes. It is true that no state is free from fault, nor any history free from bias, but we still require a careful study of the Muslim past reveals the strengths and the weaknesses of Muslims in India.[59]

Nadvi also employed *Chachnama* as a narrative of the eighth century. He placed it within a constellation of numerous other biographical and travel narratives from Arabic and Persian sources. Nadvi's efforts were to locate Arab settlers in India and to research the histories of migrations. He, like other historians of his generation and those that preceded him, wrestled with a historiography that saw Islam solely through the lens of Muslim arrival to South Asia.

The Marxist historian Mohammad Habib (1895–1971) opened his 1929 essay "Arab Conquest of Sind" with a broad differentiation between the ethics of a faith and the practitioners of that faith. Habib then tied the conquest of Sind to a longer history of movement between Arabia and India. When introducing *Chachnama,* he insisted that the text was to be seen as a whole—though he too categorized it as an account of the eighth century. In response to the colonial historiography that depicted Qasim as a temple destroyer and a despot, Habib sought to rehabilitate the figure of Muhammad Qasim as an ethical and brave commander:

> In the course of three years he had advanced from Daybul to the Himalayas. Could not another three years take him to the border of China? He had carefully studied the religion and the customs of the country and understood to perfection the policy that divided his enemies and increased his friends. His army, far from being weary of its work, longed for more victories. Moreover, it was the Hindus who had helped him to his greatest victories of peace and war, and so long as he adhered to his policy of toleration, there was every reason to expect their support.[60]

Habib asserted that Muhammad bin Qasim "alone had a conscience, the instincts and feelings of a gentleman."[61] Habib's broader response hinted at the historiographic way out of the bind that the descendants of Dow placed upon the Muslims of India (that the Muslims would remain foreign to India and that their history was a history of domination and destruction). Habib's account was thus a rehabilitation of early Muslims and a placement of Muslim history within a framework larger than conquest—such as class, trade networks, migration, and settlement. He argued that Muslim "rule" in India was a misnomer: Muslim kingships were ecumenical, and Muslims received no special favors. Habib excavated the past not to fuel sectarian difference in the present but to assert a historically sound vision of the Indic Muslim past that countered the British account.

While these historians changed the tenor of the debate about the text, they did not shift the grounds: that *Chachnama* could be read only as a text marking the eighth-century origins of Islam in India and that it was filled with superfluous stories, tales, and romantic asides. It was not read as a political theory of the thirteenth century, and it was not seen as a representation of a diverse, intermixed medieval society. Some historians discarded the Chach portion of the text entirely, for the account of the Hindu king contained nothing of note for the story of Muslims. Others recuperated histories of the masses or Muslim settlements. By the mid-nineteenth century, the readings of Islam's origins reflected an overdetermined politics of antagonistic difference between Hindus and Muslims in India. *Chachnama* then emerged in the immediate aftermath of 1947 as a foundational text for the state of Pakistan.

After 1947, thought about 712 AD fell to two sets of historians in Pakistan. One set comprised the historians of Sind—specifically U. M. Daudpota (1897–1958) and Nabi Baksh Khan Baloch (1917–2011). The other set comprised the historians of Pakistan—specifically I. H. Qureshi (1903–1981) and S. M. Ikram (1908–1973). The usage of *Chachnama* as a source text for Pakistan's "earliest" history was due to the scholarship of S. M. Ikram, whose *Ab-e Kausar* (1941) itself became the source text for Pakistan's textbooks in the 1950s and 1960s.

In 1953, Pakistan celebrated its fifth anniversary with the production of a commemorative volume issued from Karachi: *Five Years of Pakistan: August 1947–August 1952*. The second chapter, "Pakistan's Pasts," was written by the staff at the Department of Archeology. It begins by addressing sites in the Indus valley that connect the country to ancient history but quickly moves toward more important time periods. Pakistan thus presents one of its earliest official pronouncements of its origins:

> The explorations in Baluchistan and the excavations at Mohenjo-daro in 1950 had alike been concerned with the pre-historic period of the country's history and with clarifying a picture of the past which as already known in part. They represented the application of new methods and more intensive study to old problems. The excavations at Bhambhor, by contrast, were of pioneering importance. They were carried out by the Department of Archaeology early in 1951, and they represent the first attempt of a young Islamic State to understand her own Islamic past. For Bhambhor is a site not of pre-historic times, but of the Arabs' eastward expansion through Makran and Afghanistan into Sind and up to the border of 'Hind'. Its excavation is the first of the kind on an Islamic site in Pakistan or, indeed, throughout the Sub-Continent.

> For if the identification of some scholars is accepted, Bhambhor is none other than the famous port of Daibal. From this port, during the last years of Buddhist rule in Sind, pirates set forth for the Arabian Sea, to harass the flourishing trade between China and the Middle East, until the Caliph, exasperated by the ravaging of his fleets and by the refusal of the rulers of Sind to suppress the pirates, sent a force by land and by sea against Daibal. The port had thrice repulsed the Arabs, but now in 712 AD, it fell to a brilliant campaign led by the young General Muhammad bin Qasim. Its fall led in turn to the conquest of the whole of Sind, which thus became the first province in the Sub-Continent to receive Islam.[62]

The usage of the word "province" is the key which links the historical region of Sind to Pakistan's administrative unit "province." From the glorification of the 1950s to the establishment of a singular origins history of Pakistan, the government consciously developed a state in official narratives, in school textbooks, in monuments, in museums, and in public memorials. This process intensified after the second Partition of 1971, when the bloody creation of Bangladesh rendered false the notion that Muslims of India were a unitary body with a unitary, civilizational past.

The process of fixing such a notion of the origins of Pakistan began under Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, but it was General Zia ul-Haq who threw the whole weight of the state apparatus behind it. On 3 October 1977, he called for a national "New Education Policy" conference. One of this policy's goals was to "create an awareness of the Pakistani nation as a part of the universal Muslim Ummah striving through successive stages to spread the message of Islam throughout the world."[63]

In his inaugural address to the education policy conference, Zia ul-Haq called attention to Islamic history's centrality to Pakistan's ideology, mandated Arabic instruction from midlevel grades, and established the mosque as the fundamental unit of public education. His overall strategy had the explicit goal of "use[ing] Islam and Pakistani nationalism to prevent ethnic groups from breaking away from the center and to build a modern, cohesive nation out of different linguistic and ethnic groups."[64]

The educational policies created after 1977 were put in effect across the four educational boards in the country. The new textbooks introduced Muhammad bin Qasim from the fourth grade onward, progressively adding historical detail and texture to the narrative. "Advent of Islam in South Asia" is chapter 6 in the social studies textbook for the sixth grade, and it is emblematic in that it hits all of the major narrative points in the originary tale. That narrative highlights Muhammad bin Qasim's good treatment, which "overawed the people," and "Hindus began to embrace Islam in great number due to the good and kind treatment of Muslims."[65] This first-contact model was replicated throughout the school curriculum, contrasting the benevolence of warrior Muslims with the horror of local rule. The civics textbook for class ten builds on this idea: "For the first time the people of Sindh were introduced to Islam, its political system and way of government. The people here had seen only the atrocities of the Hindu rajas."[66] The result of this encounter is further detailed in a section titled "The Impact of Islam in South Asia":

> Islam spread rapidly after the conquest of Multan. The main cause was the benign treatment of Muslims with the Hindus. Due to this attitude Hindus began to love Muslims and they became nearer and nearer to Muslims. Before the Arab conquest the people were fed up with the teachings of Buddhists and Hindus. Muhamamd [*sic*] Bin Qasim was kind both with Buddhist community and Hindus. The Arabs treated the locals with generosity, good treatment and justice, with the result that most of the Hindus embraced Islam along with other Brahamans and Buddhists. They began to accept the customs and manners of the Muslims and changes took place in their lives and society.[67]

The emphasis, throughout these texts, is on how Muslim rule was benevolent and how it provided the conquered populations "complete freedom to follow their own religion irrespect [*sic*] of caste or creed."[68]

Implicit in this history is a crucial lesson for the young citizen in training: the purity of that first encounter was squandered by later generations of Muslim rulers, who fell away from the ideal established by Muhammad bin Qasim. Furthermore, history as conceived in these school textbooks is demarcated explicitly along borders. The Delhi sultanate is excluded; the majority of Mughal rule is excluded (Shah Jahan appears only because he constructed monuments and forts in

Lahore); and the British rule is introduced only after the 1840s, when Punjab and Sind are colonized.

The official publications of the state of Pakistan and the textbooks governing the rules of historical consciousness do not exhaust the ways in which Pakistan's origins narrative permeated everyday lives of the citizens. Working closely with the state, or taking its lead, were religious parties, community organizations, popular historians, novelists, and playwrights.

After the destructive war on East Pakistan, *Jama'at-i Islami*—an early and frequent recipient of Saudi Arabian largesse—became the chief organizer of *Yaum Bab ul-Islam* (Door of Islam Day) in Karachi. This was a public commemoration of Muhammad bin Qasim and his conquest of Sind. Public expressions included rallies, poetic submissions, and mass prayers. The *Jama'at* also sponsored journals and magazines devoted to extolling the virtues of the Arab Muslims and the direct linkages between Arabia and Pakistan. An example is the 2006 report that appeared in the *Daily Dawn*, Pakistan's premier English daily newspaper:

> *Yaum Bab ul Islam* was observed on Wednesday in various parts of the city, and speakers in various meetings recalled the services rendered by Mohammad bin Qasim for the people of this region who defeated the forces of tyranny, and established a rule of law here. They said even today to save the humanity from the clutches of the evil forces, a Mohammad bin Qasim is badly needed who should foil conspiracies against humanity and again make the world a cradle of peace. They said after the carnage of innocent people in Iraq and Afghanistan, the real face of the US had been unveiled. The Ummah today needed a Muhammad bin Qasim who could save it from the atrocities of the US.[69]

In direct conversation with such sentiments is the vast corpus of "Heroes of Islam"-styled narratives. These are the novels, histories, and comic books which glorify the character and deeds of that earliest generation of "Pakistanis"—the companions of Muhammad bin Qasim who accompanied him to the shores of the Indus. Communal histories trace genealogical descent from these soldiers and actively argue for social mobilization along communal lines. Such works include *Mujahid-e Azam Hazrat Muhammad b. Qasim kay Rufka Shami Muja-*

hideen yani Pak o Hind ki Qaum ʿArain ki Dastan (The Story of the Descendants of the Syrian Companion Mujahideens of the Greatest Mujahid, Muhammad bin Qasim, That Is the ʿArain Community of India and Pakistan):

> The ʿArain *qaum* (community) is *sharif* (a refined class), hardworking and of Arab descent. They are the true *mujahid* of this nation. However, we are not united or organized. Whether you write Mian, Chaudhri, etc. before your name, please write ʿArain after it. So that by seeing the word, from east to west, from Peshawer to Karachi, we can recognize ourselves.[70]

Similar originary myths were written and circulated in official histories about other communities, such as the ʿAwan, the Maliks, and the Jats. In each case, these histories represented a direct engagement with the state since they contained rosters of notable members in civil service. (General Zia ul-Haq remains the most prominent member of the ʿArain community.)

The state of Pakistan's originary narrative of Muhammad bin Qasim's conquest of Sind remains largely uncontested in recent historiography. Contemporary histories of South Asia consider Sind a "backwater region" and call the nearly three hundred years of Sind's Muslim principalities and their Muslim ecumene a "forgotten" age.[71] As a result, the most notable silence in this narrative is the silence of contemporary historiography. The paucity of contemporary historical research on the eighth through twelfth centuries has rendered any contestations of Pakistan's origins narrative either communal memory or polemical scholarship.

Conclusion

IN 1989 A. K. RAMANUJAN asked, "Is there an Indian way of thinking?" His own answer looked at a range of thought, starting from the Vedic laws of Manu to the epic of *Mahabharata* via the philologists William Jones and Max Müller. In Ramanujan's survey of Indian thought, present were *ragas* and *akam*, but he left un-commented the Persian theories of music or love as also "Indian."[1] Is the "Indian" way of thinking evident solely in one grammar, one religion, certain locales, certain specific genres? If there are Buddhist, Jain, and Hindu ways of being Indian, is there no Indian way of being Muslim and no Muslim way of being Indian? If the *Mahabharata* can elucidate Indian thought, surely that thought can also belong to a Muslim?

Conceptually and programmatically, the study of pasts in South Asia is cleanly divided between the "Indic" and the "Muslim"; between Indologists and historians; between the ancient, the medieval, and the modern; between archives of Persian, Sanskrit, Arabic, and Tamil; and between nations of Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan. Granted that there were different political regimes in the past. That difference created violence. Yet our scholarship cannot continue to insist on "Muslim pasts" and "Hindu pasts" as hermetically sealed categories. We need new histories of our collective pasts, for we continue to see all pasts through creedal differences.

In this book, I focused on the origins narrative that has governed, implicitly and explicitly, the composition of the idea of "Muslim" in India since the nineteenth century. The colonial study of the origins of Islam in India was meant to demonstrate the violence of that originary moment in 712 AD when Muhammad bin Qasim campaigned in Sind. What the idea developed into, however, was a framework for asking any and all questions about Muslim pasts in India. The Arab conquerors became the Turkish ones, who became the Afghan ones, who became the Timurid ones, and so on. Each new wave of conquerors renewed the sense of foreignness of Muslims. In the scholarly world, the names, titles, writings, poetry, architectural styles, and social and cultural ways of such Muslims were explained through their connection to their lands of origin: Arabia, Iran, Afghanistan, Central Asia. Figures such as Akbar and Dara Shikoh were understood as exceptions to the rule of despotic Muslim conquerors, for they had translated from Sanskrit to Persian or entered into dialogue with religious others. Scholarship has overwhelmingly sought to explain the political theory of any Muslim polity in terms of Iranian and Central Asian ideals. In the study of Muslim pasts in South Asia, scholars reach for texts from perceived places of origin of these rulers—places necessarily outside of India. It is considered natural to think of the relationship between Arabic and Persian texts of different times and political regimes and not to think of the relationship between contemporaneous Persian and Sanskrit texts, even when they come from the same locale.

Against that idea, I treated *Chachnama* as an Indic text written in Persian. I placed it within a rich local political landscape. I demonstrated that it contained a theory of just rule, governance, accommodation, and alliance building for a thirteenth-century Muslim polity. I demonstrated that it took as its subject the dialogic relationship between elite structures of power of Brahmin Hindus and of Muslims. I then showed how this text was discovered by British colonial agents, misread, misinterpreted, and used to cement a theory of despotic Muslim rule in India.

Within the field of the history of Islam in South Asia, scholars focus largely on histories of concepts or political histories, either ignoring studies considering Persian texts as a whole or tracing the history and afterlife of a given text. The result is that there is no clear understanding of the life of the text and the political and social world that it inhabited at any given moment. We remain constrained by histories that focus on significant peoples and significant events and where political history overpowers intellectual or cultural history. This study on *Chachnama* demonstrates how such an approach has hindered our interpretation and discovery of the political theory embedded in these texts.

■

The method of this book included my extensive walks in Uch. Those walks and the material landscape shaped my questions and guided me to think differently. The realities of post-Partition South Asia, in which the historic region of Sind is split between India and Pakistan, have made it impossible to see the whole space that is described in the texts which I study. I could not without friction imagine the full networks of mobility that my medieval texts move through. Instead of ignoring this political present, I declared its limitations to be my limitations. If I could walk from Multan, across the Cholistan desert, to Khambhat, I would know better the history I have sought to bring to light here.

One of my last walks introduced me to another historian who brings Uch to light. He is the keeper of a small graveyard in Uch. People know him as the *mu'arrakh* (historian). He is an elderly man with silver in his eyes. I was introduced to him through a colleague and was told that he knows the political history of Uch better than anyone else. I found him at the top of a mound, tending to a shrine where the graves were covered in bright red embroidered cloth. He listened to my request for histories of Uch in silence and answered me only after a further exultation by my colleague. Thereupon he spoke freely and at length. He spoke about the coming of Alexander, the rise of the Sammas, and the Mughal state in Sind as episodes which marked history in Uch from the outside. He gave references to the campaigns from the princely states of Kalat or the Talpurs and the British. In concluding, he gestured to an ontological difference in the pasts he was transcribing: the history of Uch that is visible from the outside—Alexander, Mughals, British—was distinct from that "internal" past that we saw in the trees and shrines of Uch. These were signs embedded by Sufis and mystics. The materiality of outside histories, he asserted, is devoid of an inner truth and hence detracts, obfuscates, and confuses. These material traces are read in error. The materiality of an internal past, on the other hand, is held together by an inner (*batini*) truth which can be only known to the "true historian." The task of the historian, he said, is to read the material objects and signs for their inner truth. Hence, the Uch of Muhammad bin Qasim, of the Sufi saints, of trees, of objects, or of walls takes precedence over the Uch which confounded the British. In his rendering of the past, this was the history of Uch, invisible to many, but nonetheless true.

He reached down and picked up a ball of coarse iron that was nestled among the shards of baked clay and dyed pottery. "Look," he said to me. "This is a *gola* (ball) from the cannon when the British laid siege to Uch. They fired these up at us—and like rain they fell. They are still here, embedded in the soil. The British were not able to conquer us. We are still here, and they are gone." He handed me the cannonball, and my arm fell with its weight. I examined it, trying to see it as a historical object. I had never held a cannonball before and had no clue as to what one felt like in the hand. The old man began to walk, and I walked with him, holding the *gola*.

He continued to talk as we walked: "The British conquered all of Sind, but they did not conquer Uch, because Uch is protected by these shrines." He gestured around the graveyard. "Their cannonballs bounced off the shrines; not one shrine was damaged." I interjected that Uch was actually taken by General Charles Napier with the loss of only eighteen British soldiers and was then made the headquarters of Napier's campaign to rid Sind of "dacoits and terrorists."[2] He held me in his stare and let the remark stand. I held out the cannonball to him. "Where do you want me to put this?" I asked. "Just toss it. It fell here." He gestured toward the side of a small bush. I did as told, gave my regards, and walked away.

I have struggled to understand my conversation with this historian of Uch. At first, my incredulity at his treatment of the cannonball clouded my thinking. He had dismissed a material piece of history that I would feel the necessity to put in a museum or to memorialize with a note. In this man's narrative, Uch had constantly rebuffed conquerors, and the British cannonball was mere evidence—just another artifact. The logic of his narrative did not require the presence of the cannonball.

I had tried to correct him. I had told him that Uch had indeed been conquered, not just by the British but also by Genghis Khan, by Iltutmish, by Firuz Shah Tughluq, by Humayun, and by Akbar. Uch was a center to which most political powers of North India had gravitated. So I had quickly asserted that he was telling the wrong story about Uch to himself and to others.

I later became unsure of my own understanding of this place. These many military "conquests" of Uch did not change the history which he was remarking upon: the spiritual and cultural significance of Uch. Indeed, from the perspective of the imperial and political centers of Baghdad, Delhi, or London, many figures had overcome Uch and had ravaged the landscape. However, from the perspective of Uch, one could see the resilience of the structures and frames that connected medieval shrines to practices, practices to texts, texts to markets, and markets to networks that reached far and wide. This was the landscape that gave birth to the Indic *Chachnama* and then preserved it and nurtured it since the thirteenth century. The story of an always-conquered Uch could not explain how this text came to be written in the first place and why it survived.

What I have tried to do in this book is to give an answer to these questions in a way that makes sense to the historian in Uch. I have tried to take away the supremacy that the question of conquest held for me, for the field of South Asian history, and for the political entities of contemporary South Asia. I have taken away the cornerstone of the origins narrative through a rereading of *Chachnama*. My hope is that other anti-foundational histories that re-examine the origins narrative would force a paradigmatic shift in how we conceive of Muslim pasts in India. My hope is that the narrative I have presented—one in which a political theory of rule is constituted across traditions and placed in a landscape that mirrors the intertwined history—can prompt us to open up our archives and ask new questions.

The stories we tell have consequences.

Notes

Works Cited

Acknowledgments

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Notes

INTRODUCTION

1. On these particular national myths, see Christopher B. Krebs, *A Most Dangerous Book: Tacitus's Germania from the Roman Empire to the Third Reich* (W. W. Norton: 2011); Robert H. Morrissey, *Charlemagne and France: A Thousand Years of Mythology* (University of Notre Dame Press, 2003); Stephanie L. Barczewski, *Myth and National Identity in Nineteenth-Century Britain: The Legends of King Arthur and Robin Hood* (London: Oxford University Press, 2000). Among others, I am indebted in my understandings of origins and beginnings to Edward W. Said's *Beginnings: Intention and Method* (New York: Basic Books, 1975), pp. 27–43. I also draw upon the works of Friedrich Nietzsche, Marc Bloch, and Michel Foucault on the question of origins, and upon R. G. Collingwood, Carolyn Steedman, Joan W. Scott, and Quentin Skinner on the issue of interpretation.
2. Mohammad Ali Jinnah, *Some Recent Speeches and Writings of Mr. Jinnah*, vol 1. (Lahore: S. M. Ashraf Publishers, 1947), pp. 174–180.
3. M. S. Golwalkar, *We or Our Nationhood Defined* (Nagpur: P. V. Belwalkar, 1938), p. 17. Though historically credited to M. S. Golwalkar, current scholarship registers the author of the pamphlet *We or Our Nationhood Defined* as Ganesh Damodar Savarkar with Golwalkar's name appended to the pamphlet. See Jyotirmaya Sharma, *Terrifying Vision: M. S. Golwalkar, the RSS, and India* (New Delhi: Viking, 2007), p. xix.
4. I remind us here of Bruno Latour's words on moderns and antimoderns agreeing on the same narrative: "Look for the origins of the modern myths, and you will almost always find them among those who claim to be countering modernism with the impenetrable barrier of the spirit, of emotion, the subject, or the margins. In the effort to offer a supplement of soul to the modern world, the one it has is taken away—the one it had, the one it was

quite incapable of losing. That subtraction and that addition are the two operations that allow the moderns and the antimoderns to frighten each other by agreeing on the essential point: we are absolutely different from the others, and we have broken radically with our own past." Here, the two understandings are similarly in agreement about their radical break from the past, while relying on the myth of origins. See Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), p. 130.

5. V. S. Naipaul, *India: A Wounded Civilization* (London: Penguin Books, 1977), p. 172.
6. Romila Thapar's *Somanatha: the many voices of a history* (New Delhi: Penguin Press, 2004), Ramya Sreenivasan's *The Many Lives of a Rajput Queen: Heroic Pasts in India c. 1500–1900* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2007). Shahid Amin's *Conquest and Community: The Afterlife of Warrior Saint Ghazi Miyan* (New Delhi: Orient BlackSwan, 2015), and Cynthia Talbot's *The Last Hindu Emperor: Prithviraj Chauhan and the Indian Past, 1200–2000* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015) approach binary categories of Hindu/Muslim by fracturing the historical certainty. These excellent studies introduce multiple voices, provide ranges of historical depiction, and point out usages of historical past outside of dominant historiography.
7. For example, A. Azfar Moin's *The Millennial Sovereign: Sacred Kingship and Sainthood in Islam* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014) recapitulates the earlier scholarship of John F. Richards to argue Mughal understanding of kingship to be entirely derived from Central Asian or Safavid theories of kingship—without any connection to either earlier Muslim polities or contemporary Rajput or Vijayanagar polities. This prohibitively narrow analytical lens makes sense only if one consistently argues that Mughal polity is *sui generis* "outside" of a history of India. Another illustration of this comes via Sudipta Kaviraj's 1995 influential essay "Religion, Politics and Modernity," where he notes, repeatedly, "actual historical record" to assert this difference back to the premodern world where Hindu and Muslim communities understood better the "'inside' and 'outside' realms" of interactions. For Kaviraj, even though he is critiquing both the nationalist and communalist understanding of premodern India, the historicity of Muslims as "outsiders" governs the ways in which "assimilation" failed. (He marks two sets of "indigenous" in his essay—indigenous society and indigenous converts—the first of which is insider and the second outsider.) See, Sudipta Kaviraj, "Religion, Politics and Modernity," in *Crisis and Change in Contemporary India*, Upendra Bax and Bhikhu Parekh, eds. (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1995), p. 170.
8. These broad statements are meant to highlight the uniqueness of the extraordinarily important work of scholars like Phillip Waggoner and Richard Eaton on Vijayanagar—*Power, Memory, Architecture: Contested Sites on India's Deccan Plateau, 1300–1600* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2014—and Finbarr Flood on Ghaznavi north India—*Objects of Translation: Material Culture and Medieval "Hindu-Muslim" Encounter* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009)—who directly inform the work I am doing here.

9. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Untimely Meditations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 103.
10. V. S. Naipaul, *Among the Believers: An Islamic Journey* (New York: Vintage Books, 1982), p. 129.
11. Ibid., p. 132.
12. *Social Studies for Class 6* (Lahore: Punjab Textbook Board, 2003), p. 72.
13. Faisal Shahzad, "My Beloved and Peaceful Ummah," *New York Times* (May 15, 2010). http://documents.nytimes.com/e-mail-from-faisal-shahzad#text/p1.
14. Javed Chaudhry, "Aafia Siddiqui, Qaum tumharay Sath hai," *Daily Jang* (August 6, 2008).
15. Nasrullah Bhatti, "American qaidi Simon Narwan aur Aafia Siddiqui," *Daily Waqt* (August 26, 2008).
16. I want to label these invocations as *exempla*, following the definition from Jacques Le Goff: "a short story intended as truthful to be used inside a discourse (generally as sermon) in order to persuade an audience through an edifying lesson." See Jacques Le Goff, "L' 'Exemplum' Medieval," in Claude Brémond, Jacques Le Goff, and Jean-Claude Schmitt, *"L' Exemplum": Typologie des Sources du Moyen Âge Occidental* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1982), pp. 15–107. The events of Muhammad bin Qasim's campaigns echoes in its circulation, doing the pedagogic work of the exemplum and also, in its contextual malleability, the didactic work.
17. Another starkly violent reminder of historical memory's pernicious grip on socially fractured presents was the terrorist attack of Dylann Roof in a Charleston church on June 17, 2015. As Eric Foner noted, "Roof has a sense of history, warped though it may be. He claims to have read 'hundreds' of slave narratives, all demonstrating, to his satisfaction, how benevolently slaves were treated—an idea long discredited by historians, but still encountered on white-supremacist websites and conservative talk-radio shows." See Eric Foner, "The Historical Roots of Dylann Roof's Racism," *The Nation* (July 20–27, 2015). www.thenation.com/article/the-historical-roots-of-dylann-roofs-racism.
18. Muhammad Habib, "Arab Conquest of Sind," *Islamic Culture* 3 (1929): 184
19. R. C. Majumdar, "The Arab Invasion of India," *Journal of Indian History* 10 (1931): 13.
20. S. H. Hodivala, *Studies in Indo-Muslim History: A Critical Commentary on Elliot and Dowson's History of India* (Bombay:[s.n.]1939), p. 83.
21. See H. T. Lambrick, *Sind, before the Muslim Conquest* (Hyderabad: Sindh Adabi Board, 1973), Peter Hardy, "Is the Chach Nama Intelligible to the Historian as Political Theory?" ed., H. Khuhro, *Sind through the Centuries* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1981), pp. 111–117, and Yohanan Friedmann, "The Origins and Significance of the Chach Nama" in ed., Yohanan Friedmann, *Islam in Asia*, vol. 1: South Asia (Boulder: Westview Press, 1984), pp. 23–37.
22. Friedmann, The *Origins and Significance of the Chach Nāma*, p. 28.
23. See Irfan Habib, "Linguistic Materials from Eighth-Century Sind: An Exploration of the Chachnāma," in *Recording the Progress of Indian History: Symposia Papers of the Indian History Congress 1992–2010*, ed. S. Z. H. Jafri

(Delhi: Primus Books, 2012). My thanks to the anonymous reviewer for alerting me to this essay.

24. S. Bose and A. Jalal. *Modern South Asia: History, Culture, Political Economy* (New York: Routledge, 2004), p. 20.
25. I use "Uch" throughout the book, although "Uch Sharif" is the more common designation for the modern city in Pakistan.
26. *Chachnama*, Azad Collection, Oriental Library, Punjab University. No. A: Pe III/77.
27. Mirza Kalichbeg Fredunbeg, *The Chachnamah, An Ancient History of Sind* (Delhi: Idarah-i Adabiyat-i Delli, 1900).
28. U. M. Daudpota, *Fathnama-i Sind* (Hyderabad Deccan: Majlis Maktutat-e Farsia, 1939).
29. N. A. Baloch, *Fathnama-i Sind* (Islamabad: Institute of Islamic History, Culture, and Civilization, 1982).
30. I use "Muslim" here as a broader category, understanding that it contains heterogeneous groups—such as the various Shi'a denominations. I try, throughout the text, to mark out the sectarian nomenclature where it is important.
31. I draw here on Ronald Inden and Daud Ali's extension of R. G. Collingwood. See Ronald Inden, "Introduction: From Philological to Dialogical Text," in *Querying the Medieval: Texts and the History of Practices in South Asia*, ed. Ronald Inden, Jonathan Walters, and Daud Ali (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 3–28.
32. At the same time, I am acutely aware that while I could understand the material world imagined in *Chachnama*, I was not able to experience that world. As a post-partitioned historian, my facility to move and circulate in the world is restricted by the regimes of access and passport control. My current immobility creates a barrier to access material or textual artifacts of the past. It was only by listening to stories of Gulf migrants and tracing the stories of peripatetic tribes across Thar and Rajasthan deserts that I began to see how to differently constitute the world of the text.
33. See the opening woodcut showing a "native," Volney peering at a ruined city, and the discussion in the chapter of C. F. Volney in *Volney's Ruins; or, Meditation on the Revolutions of Empires* (Boston: C. Gaylord, 1835).
34. I find it apropos that Momigliano, when discussing Gibbon's contribution to the historical method, notes it with an ambulatory verb: "at this point Gibbon stepped in." In the essay, Momigliano retraces Gibbon's travel through Turin, Milan, Genoa, Lucca, and Florence to point out that his interest in the geographical dimension of the Roman empire and its decline were linked to Gibbon's own travels among the ruins. See Arnaldo Momigliano, "Gibbon's Contribution to Historical Method," *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte* Bd. 2, H. 4 (1954), pp. 450–463. Momigliano's own relationship to thinking through space is present in the beginning of his other essay on Gibbon—"I happen to be writing my piece on Gibbon in Spoleto." See Arnaldo Momigliano, "Gibbon from an Italian Point of View," *Daedalus* vol. 105, no. 3 (summer 1976), pp. 125–135.

35. I am specifically thinking here of Georg Simmel's essay on ruin as an "object infused with our nostalgia." See Georg Simmel, "Two Essays: 'The Handle' and 'The Ruin,'" *The Hudson Review* 11(3), 1958, pp. 371–85. It is not the "imperial ruin" that forms the foreground of Ann Stoler's intervention in landscapes of imperial formations. See Ann Laura Stoler, "Imperial Debris: Reflections on Ruins and Ruination," *Cultural Anthropology* vol. 23, no. 2 (2008), pp. 191–219.
36. Another reason, outside of the question of ruins, is that unlike the work of Gibbon or Momigliano, my investigation of the medieval past is spatially limited; I cannot easily access sites located in Rajasthan and Gujarat (India), which were parts of the medieval world I am investigating. The historian of Rome, whether during the interwar period or after World War II, could travel to sites and archives from Italy to France to Germany to Greece to Spain, unencumbered by passport regimes—restrictions or hindrances emanating from the facts of their birth.
37. See Walter Benjamin, "Paris, Hauptstadt des XIX Jahrhunderts," *Illuminationen* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1977), pp. 170–184, and *Berliner Kindheit um neunzehnhundert* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1987). I also draw upon Robert T. Tally's intervention in his discussions of "geocriticism" by humanities scholars involved in the spatial sciences of textual hermeneutics. See Robert T. Tally Jr. *Spatiality* (New York: Routledge, 2013).
38. As Benjamin inscribes and reinscribes a montage (*dialektischen Bildes*) in his effort to see the city, he reads these insights back into Baudelaire's text. See Georges Didi-Huberman, "The Supposition of the Aura: The Now, the Then, and Modernity," in *Walter Benjamin and History*, ed. Andrew Benjamin (New York: Continuum, 2005), pp. 3–19.
39. On the relationship between Sufis from Uch and sultans, see Simon Digby, "Before Timur Came: Provincialization of the Delhi Sultanate through the Fourteenth Century," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* vol. 47, no. 3 (2004), pp. 298–356. On Jahanian, see Amina M. Steinfels, *Knowledge before Action: Islamic Learning and Sufi Practice in the Life of Sayyid Jalāl al-dīn Bukhārī Makhdūm-i Jahāniyān* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2012).
40. Michel Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1977), pp. 139–165.
41. Quentin Skinner, *Visions of Politics: Regarding Method* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 125.
42. Marc Bloch, *The Historian's Craft*, trans. Peter Putman (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008), pp. 24–29.

1. FRONTIER WITH THE HOUSE OF GOLD

1. For an exposition of Sufi miracles, including flying on walls, see Simon Digby, "To Ride a Tiger or a Wall? Strategies of Prestige in Indian Sufi Legend," *According to Tradition: Hagiographical Writing in India*, ed.

Winand Callewaert and Rupert Snell (Wiesbaden: Harrossowitz Verlag, 1994), pp. 99–129.

2. Martin W. Lewis, "Dividing the Ocean Sea," *Geographical Review* 89, no. 2 (April 1999): 96.
3. "Rome" can mean anything from Hellenic Egypt to Byzantine Constantinople. There is also confusion in sources as to whether "India" refers to the subcontinent or to East Africa, Ceylon, or even China—notwithstanding the occasional references to coastal towns of Malabar and Sindou (Sind). See Philip Mayerson, "A Confusion of Indias: Asian India and African India in the Byzantine Sources," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 113, no. 2 (April–June 1993), pp. 169–174. Conspicuously, neither the China/Western India or China/Malay, nor the Arabia/India or Arabia/East Africa arcs have garnered much scholarly attention. Moreover, the scholarship has overwhelming situated the trade within a Rome/East or West/East framework. It was not until K. N. Chaudhuri's *Trade and Civilisation in the Indian Ocean: An Economic History from the Rise of Islam to 1750* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985) and Janet Abu-Lughod's *Before European Hegemony: The World System A.D. 1250–1350* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989) that a corrective was offered to the Rome-centered scholarship. Scholars such as the late Ashin Das Gupta, André Wink, and Ranabir Chakravarti have since moved the conversation forward. More promisingly, the scope of inquiry is advancing from the movements and networks of trade and goods to ideas, peoples, and communities in the work of Li Guo, Tansen Sen, Gwyn Campbell, and Denys Lombard. For an excellent example of the cultural seascape of the Indian Ocean, see Engseng Ho, *The Graves of Tarim: Genealogy and Mobility across the Indian Ocean* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006).
4. Nile Green, "Re-Thinking the 'Middle East' after the Oceanic Turn," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 34, 3 (2014).
5. The pattern of yearly monsoon winds, tides, and currents in the Indian Ocean provides a ready framework for understanding the movement of goods and people through the millennia. During the summer months (June to November) the monsoon winds and the tide go down the eastern shore of the Red Sea, hugging the coastline of the Gulf across to western India, around the tip of the subcontinent into the Bay of Bengal, and from the Andaman Islands into the South China Sea. During the winter months (December to May), the winds retrace their path back.
6. See Elisabeth C. L. During Caspers, "Sumer, Coastal Arabia and the Indus Valley in Protoliterate and Early Dynastic Eras: Supporting Evidence for a Cultural Linkage," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 22, no. 2 (May 1979), pp. 121–135.
7. Lionel Casson, "South Arabia's Maritime Trade in the First Century A.D.," *L'Arabie Préislamique et son Environnement Historique et Culturel* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1989), p. 187.
8. Steven E. Sidebotham, "Ports of the Red Sea and the Arabia-India Trade," in *Rome and India: The Ancient Sea Trade* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1991), pp. 12–35.

9. Monica L. Smith, "The Dynamic Realm of the Indian Ocean: A Review," *Asian Perspectives* vol. 36, no. 2 (fall 1997), pp. 245–259.
10. For the classical study, see E. H. Warmington, *The Commerce between the Roman Empire and India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1928). Also, Mortimer Wheeler, *Rome beyond the Imperial Frontiers* (Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin, 1954). And most recently, G. W. Bowersock, *Roman Arabia* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983).
11. See Lionel Casson, *The Periplus Maris Erythraei: Text with Introduction, Translation, and Commentary* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989).
12. See Ranabir Chakravarti, *Trade in Early India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2001) for a fuller discussion of the historiographical issues surrounding India and the Indian Ocean trade.
13. See Grant Parker, "*Ex Oriente Luxuria*: Indian Commodities and Roman Experience," *Journal of Economic and Social History of the Orient* 45, no. 1, (2002), pp. 40–95.
14. See J. W. McCrindle, *Ancient India as Described by Ktesias the Knidian* (London: Trübner and Co., 1882) and J. W. McCrindle, *Ancient India as Described by Megasthenes and Arrian* (London: Trübner and Co., 1877).
15. The logical extension of India as a site of immense wealth and immense wisdom is the emergence, in medieval accounts, of descriptions that place Paradise "in or beyond" India, "in the desert, impassable for people, in the oriental zone." For an excellent overview, see Rudolf Wittkower, "Marvels of the East: A Study in the History of Monsters," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 5 (1942), pp. 159–197. Such linkages prospered into other supernatural geographies, as in the thirteenth-century long poem *L'image du Monde* or the Hereford Mappa Mundi. They also contributed to the development of the rich mythography of Prester John. India, established thusly by Greek and Roman sources, remained ossified in the medieval European mind as the "fantastic, realized beyond the horizons of the everyday world." See Natalie Lozovsky, *The Earth Is Our Book: Geographical Knowledge in the Latin West ca. 400–1000* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000).
16. See Derek Kennet and Regina Krahl, *Sasanian and Islamic Pottery from Ras al-Khaimah* (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2004).
17. The historiographical and etymological links between Sarandip, the Arabic Sarandib, Sinhala-dvipa, Ceylon, and current-day Sri Lanka are rather convoluted. See James E. Tennent, *Ceylon: An Account of the Island, Physical, Historical, and Topographical, with Notices of Its Natural History, Antiquities and Productions* (London: Longman, Green, Longman, and Roberts, 1860) and W. J. van der Meulen, "Suvarṇadvīpa and the Chrysê Chersonesos," *Indonesia* 18 (1974). My thanks to Sonam Kachru for the references.
18. J. W. McCrindle, *The Christian Topography of Cosmas, an Egyptian Monk* (London: Hakluyt Society, 1898), p. 366.
19. See David Whitehouse, "Sasanian Maritime Activity," in *The Indian Ocean in Antiquity*, ed. Julian Reade (London: Kegan Paul International, 1996).

20. See Richard B. Mather, "Chinese and Indian Perceptions of Each Other between the First and Seventh Centuries," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 112, no. 1 (Jan.–Mar. 1992), pp. 1–8.
21. Samuel Beal, *Travels of Fah-Hian and Sung-Yun: Buddhist Pilgrims from China to India (400 A.D. and 518 A.D)* (New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1996), p. 155.
22. André Wink, *Al-Hind: The Making of the Indo-Muslim World*, vol. 1 (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 5.
23. This construction of the "Hindu" is usually credited to the British colonial period, but some arguments have pointed toward Muslim rule in India as well. See David Lorenzen, "Who Invented Hinduism?" *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 41, no. 4 (Oct. 1999), pp. 630–659 for a good discussion of the historical as well as historiographical issues involved. Also, see Arvind Sharma, "On Hindu, Hindustân, Hinduism and Hindutva," *Numen* 49, no. 1 (2002), pp. 1–36.
24. In classical Arabic, there were two clear usages of *al-Hind* and related words based on the h-n-d stem: *mūhind, mūhindāh, hindi, hindūvani*. The first is of *Hind* as a proper, feminine name for prominent women. The most known example is Hind bint 'Utbah, the wife of Abu Sufyan, mother of Mu'awiya (602–680), who was the founder of the Umayyad dynasty. Another famous prominent woman in early sources, is Queen Hind al Hunud (Hind of the Hinds), who founded the fifth-century central Arabian kingdom of Kindah. See Nabia Abbott, "Pre-Islamic Arab Queens," *The American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures* 58, no. 1 (Jan. 1941), pp. 1–22. The second dominant usage comes with products labeled as being "from al-Hind." They were mostly swords (*saif al-hindi, saif hindvani*), but they also included metal, camphor, sandalwood (*'ud Hind*), musk, zanjabil, silk, and various spices. However, that the products are termed "from al-Hind" provides no guarantee that they can be shown to correspond as originating from the subcontinent. Merchandise that could have origins elsewhere—silk (China), camphor (Malay), metal (Aksumite Ethiopia) are all tagged as "Hindi." See Nada 'Abd al-Rahman Yusuf al-Shayi', *Mu'jam Alfāẓ al-ḥayāh al-Ijtimā'īyah fī Dawāwīn Shu'arā' al-Mu'allaqāt al-'Ashr* (Beirut: Maktab Lebanon, 1991), pp. 313–314.
25. There exist raging debates on the identity of the mythic river Sarasvati (and whether or not it was the Indus) among the Hindutva supporters wishing a particularly Indo-Aryan root to the Indus civilization. To get a sense of the etymological debate, see Michael Witzel, "Substrate Languages in Old Indo-Aryan (Rgvedic, Middle and Late Vedic)," *Electronic Journal of Vedic Studies* 5, no. 1 (Aug. 1999), pp. 1–67. On the historiographical and political debates, see the laudable Irfan Habib, "Imaging River Sarasvati: A Defence of Commonsense," *Social Scientist* 29, no. 1/2, (Jan.—Feb. 2001), pp. 46–74.
26. A. H. Sayce. *Lectures on the Origin and Growth of Religion as Illustrated by the Religion of the Ancient Babylonians* (Edinburgh: Williams and Norgate, 1888), p. 138.
27. See W. Muss-Arnolt, "On Semitic Words in Greek and Latin," *Transactions of the American Philological Associations (1869–1896)* 23 (1892).

28. See Michael Flecker, "A Ninth-Century AD Arab or Indian Shipwreck in Indonesia: First Evidence for Direct Trade with China," *World Archaeology* 32, no. 3 (Feb. 2001), pp. 335–354.
29. S. Maqbul Ahmad, *Arabic Classical Accounts of India and China* (Shimla: Indian Institute of Advanced Study, 1989), pp. 38–40.
30. Fred M. Donner, *Narratives of Islamic Origins: The Beginnings of Islamic Historical Writing* (Princeton: The Darwin Press, 1998), p. 181.
31. This early Muslim historian is known to have written more than 200 works, including the following on al-Hind: *Kitab Kirman* (Book on the Region of Kirman), *Kitab Futuh Makran* (Book on the Conquest of the Region of Makran), *Kitab Thughur al-Hind* (Book on the Frontier of Hind), and *Kitab Amal al-Hind* (Book on the Governors of Hind). See Bayard Dodge, *The Fihrist of al-Nadīm: A Tenth Century Survey of Muslim Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970), p. 225.
32. Ahmad ibn Yahya Balādhurī, *Futūh al-Buldān* (Beirut: Maktaba al-Hilāl, 1988), p. 416.
33. See N. A. Baloch, "The Probable Date of the First Arab Expeditions to India," *Islamic Culture* 20 (1946), pp. 250–266.
34. Balādhurī, *Futūh al-Buldān*, p. 416.
35. See Matthew S. Gordon, *The Breaking of a Thousand Swords: A History of the Turkish Military of Samarra (A.H. 200–275/815–889 C.E.)* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001).
36. *Futūh al-Buldān*, pp. 416–417.
37. Ibid., p. 417.
38. In 663–664, 'Abdallah bin Sawwar Abdi led two expeditions to Kikan, perishing in the second. In 665, Sinan ibn Salamah reached Makran and established a fort. Sinan's tenure, however, was short-lived, as Makran was soon lost to the Muslims. Hence, the northernmost outpost of Muslims in the last decades of the seventh century was at Bust in southern Afghanistan. From here, raids to capture goods and slaves were carried into Makran or toward Kabul but without much success. The local Zunbils of Zamindawar and Zabulistan, and the Kabulshahs of Kabul were often persuaded to pay tribute but, with the lack of a standing army, they often changed their mind and were a ferocious opponent. Additionally, the impenetrable region provided ample sanctuary to the Azariqa Kharajite—rebels against the Umayyad regime—who used it as a base to launch attacks. Ibn Khurdadhbih cites a couplet from Ibn Mufarrigh which laments the many graves that were filled with Arab fighters at Kandhar. This may refer to another tradition about Qandhar (Kandahar, Afghanistan) that was often cited by nineteenth-century Orientalists like Augustus Le Messurier and Joseph Pierre Ferrier: "In the time of al-Muqtadār (916), during the digging for the foundation of a tower in Kandahar, a subterranean cave was discovered, in which were a thousand Arab heads, all attached to the same chain, which had evidently remained in good preservation since the year 70/698, for a paper with this date upon it was found attached by a silken thread to the ears of the twenty-nine most important skulls, with their proper names." Needless to say Qandhar did not have

a good reputation for future conquerors. The episode in question may be ʿUbaidallah bin Abi Bakra's attempted invasion of Afghanistan in 698. See C. E. Bosworth, "ʿUbaidullāh b. Abī Bakra and the 'Army of Destruction' in Zābulistān," *Der Islam* 50, 1973, pp. 268–283 and J. P. Ferrier, *Caravan Journey and Wanderings in Persia, Afghanistan, Turkistan and Beloochistan* (London: John Murray, 1856), p. 323.

39. *Futūh al-Buldān.*, p. 418.
40. That was the ill-fated Saʿid bin Aslam bin Zurʿah al-Kalbi. (*Futūh al-Buldān*, p. 419.)
41. *Futūh al-Buldān*, pp. 419–420.
42. André Wink, *Al-Hind: The Making of the Indo-Islamic World* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 164.
43. *Futūh al-Buldān*, p. 420.
44. Ibid., pp. 420–424.
45. Ibid., p. 426.
46. Ibid.
47. Ibid.
48. Ibid., p. 427.
49. Ibid.
50. Ibid.
51. Ibid.
52. Ibid.
53. For a thorough treatment of the financial demands upon the Umayyads, see Khalid Yahya Blankinship, *The End of the Jihād State: The Reign of Hishām Ibn ʿAbd Al-Malik and the Collapse of the Umayyads* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), pp. 47–73.
54. Samuel Beal, *Buddhist Records of the Western World: Translated from the Chinese of Hiuen Tsiang* (London: Trübner and Co., 1884), p. 272.
55. *Futūh al-Buldān*, p. 422.
56. There are only two cases of temple destruction mentioned in Baladhuri's chapter on Sind and Hind. The first is during the reign of ʿAbbasid Mansur (r. 750–754), when commander Hisham ibn ʿAmr Taghlabi demolishes a temple and constructs a mosque in its place (*hadm al-budd wa bani modhā masjida*) in Kandahar. The second is during the caliphate of Muʿtasim (r. 813–833), when a local king of Usaifan demolishes his own temple, destroys the images contained therein, and kills the priests. He later converts to Islam and builds a mosque.
57. Leonard W. J. Van Der Kuijp brings to our attention the earliest mention (outside of the Qur'an) of *musulman*, from a Sanskrit commentary by Avalokitavrata, dated 700, which survives in a Tibetan translation. The text, intriguingly, refers to the "traditions" of the "mu-sul-man" and reads familiarly as a "praise" or "eulogy" of a king (*prashasti*). See Leonard W. J. Van Der Kuijp, "The Earliest Indian Reference to Muslims in a Buddhist Philosophical Text of circa 700," *Journal of Indian Philosophy* vol. 34 (2006), pp. 169–202. My thanks to Sonam Kachru for drawing my attention to this reference. For the more common terms denoting Muslims in Sanskrit sources, see Barjdulal Chattopadhyaya, *Representing the Other?: Sanskrit*

Sources and the Muslims (Eighth to Fourteenth Century) (New Delhi: Manohar Publishers, 1998).

58. See *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum, vol. IV, part 1: Inscriptions of the Kalachuri-Chedi Era*, no. 30, plate XXIII, pp. 137–45. My thanks to Blake T. Wentworth for the translation:

> His younger brother, absorbed in devotion to his lotus feet, is the eminent King Pulakeśin, Sustainer of the Peoples of the Earth. A devotee of Maheśvara, a sovereign, his ascendency increases with each passing day. Ever since childhood, he has borne every kind of virtue. Rājalakṣmī, the goddess of royal fortune, has chosen to embrace his chest entirely of her own will. With the spread of his pure white fame, he frees the entire earth from stain. The eminent King Vallabha, who is enamored of heroism, graciously conferred on him four more titles—"Mainstay of the South," "Gem of the Cālukya Lineage," "Earth's Beloved," and "Evictor of Those Who Do Not Withdraw"—when the Tājika forces were defeated. On the battle front, headless bodies formed dancing circles, moving to the piercing beat of war drums that pounded incessantly, their delight seemingly caused by one thought: "Today at last, the debt of one lifetime that we owe to our lord has been cleared with this payment of our own heads!"
>
> The Tājikas had torn apart such renowned kings as the Saindhava, Kacchella, Saurāṣṭra, Cāvoṭaka, Maurya, and Gurjara with their piercing, brightly gleaming swords. Hurling arrows, lances, and clubs, they were eager to enter the South and conquer. From the outset, they came to subjugate the realm of Navasārikā. The tough, noisy hooves of their steeds kicked up the ground to shroud the earth with dust in all directions. Their bodies were hideous, their armor reddened with torrents of blood from innards that had burst out from the heavy bellies of great warriors who had rushed them wildly and were mangled by the blades of their spears. The best among hosts of kings had not defeated them before. Any number of champions' bodies were armored with hair that bristled in the fury of their battle spirit. These were men who attacked the Tājikas head on, giving their own heads in exchange for the extraordinary gifts and honors they accepted from their lord. They bit their pursed lips cruelly with the tips of their teeth, their turbans and honed swords reddened by a thick veil of blood that had poured from wounds in the trunks and sloping cheeks of enemy elephants, who had only the nooks and crannies of countless battlefields for a stable. Though they were mighty warriors, who sliced enemy necks like lotus stalks with a hail of arrows tipped with forged crescent blades, launched in a swift barrage to destroy their foes, they did not establish their dominance.

59. See S. Qudratullah Fatimi, "The Twin Ports of Daybul: A Study in the Early Maritime History of Sind," in *Sind through the Centuries* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1981), pp. 97–105; and F. A. Khan, "Debal and Mansura: The Historical Cities of the Early Islamic Period," *Pakistan Journal of History and Culture* vol. II, no. 1 (Jan. 1981), pp. 103–122.
60. *Futūh al-Buldān*, p. 438.
61. Ibid., 438.
62. Abu'l Hasan ʿAlī bin Husayn Masʿūdi, *Murūj al-Dhahab wa-Maʿādin al-Jawahir*, vol. 1, (Beirut: Dāar al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1985), p. 99.

63. See C. E. Bosworth, "Rulers of Makrān and Quṣdār in the Early Islamic Period," *Studia Iranica*, vol. 23, pp. 199–209; and M. S. Khan, "The Five Arab States in South Asia," *Hamdard Islamicus* vol. 15, no. 2 (1992), pp. 5–28.
64. For a detailed analysis of early Isma'ili history in Sind, see Derryl N. Maclean, *Religion and Society in Arab Sind* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1989).

2. A FOUNDATION FOR HISTORY

1. Genre has long determined the horizon of interpretation in South Asian historiography. The classification of texts, based on both internal and external evidence, orients the reader to its style, approach, audience, and influence. Under the colonial gaze, the genres were imbued with power as well—both in the sense that particular genres were collected, archived, and published, and in the sense that particular genres were deemed "historical." A wider discussion of British, German, French, and Dutch collections remains necessary for a full conversation. It is to the credit of Narayana Rao, David Shulman, and Sanjay Subrahmanyam that they tackled the second aspect in their now-classic *Textures of Time*. My effort here is in conversation with their work. See V. N. Rao, David Shulman, and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *Textures of Time: Writing History in South India, 1600–1800* (Delhi: Permanent Black, 2001).
2. Contrast this with the way in which contemporary scholarship reads as "cosmopolitan" the eleventh-century scholar and poet Bilhana, who was born in Kashmir and moved more than a thousand miles south to the Chalukya court in Kalyani. See Whitney Cox, "Saffron in the Rasam," *South Asian Texts in History: Critical Engagements with Sheldon Pollock*, edited by Yigal Bronner, Whitney Cox, and Lawrence McCrea. (Ann Arbor, MI: Association of Asian Studies, 2011), pp. 177–201.
3. By the late tenth century, the city states of Multan, Uch, and Mansura were governed by Oman-based Ismai'li rulers who looked toward the Fatimid caliphate in Egypt. This world faced its fiercest challenge from the north—from those seeking favor of the caliph in Baghdad. See Samuel M. Stern, "Isma'ili Propaganda and Fatimid Rule in Sind," *Islamic Culture* 23 (1949), pp. 298–307; and C. E. Bosworth, *The Ghaznavids* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1963); and Peter Jackson, *The Delhi Sultanate: A Political and Military History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).
4. Such as the two travel accounts by Buddhist monks Faxian (active ca. 399–417) and Xuanzang (602–664), who provide firsthand and detailed reports of cities, ports, and routes in India. See Samuel Beal, *Travels of Fah-Hian and Sung-Yun: Buddhist Pilgrims from China to India (400 A.D. and 518 A.D)* (London: Trübner and Co., 1869).
5. R. B. Whitehead, "Multan: The House of Gold," *The Numismatic Chronicle and Journal of the Royal Numismatic Society* vol. 17, no. 65 (1937), pp. 60–72; and Yohanan Friedmann, "The Temple of Multān: A Note on Early Muslim Attitudes to Idolatry," *Israel Oriental Studies* (1972), pp. 176–182.
6. See C. E. Bosworth, *The Ghaznavids: Their Empire in Afghanistan and Eastern Iran 994–1040* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1963).

7. Jūzjānī, Minhāj Sirāj, *Tabaqāt-i Nāsirī*, ed. 'Abd Hayy Habibi (Quetta: Silsilah-i Asar-i Habibi, 1949, pp. 743–744.
8. I am using the more generic "Delhi" though the city has had several iterations. What Juzjani calls *Hazrat-i Dilli* (Exalted Delhi) or Uch as *Hazrat-e Uch* is taken to mean "capital city."

   The clearest articulation of the stage of transition is outlined in Sunil Kumar, "Courts, Capitals and Kingship: Delhi and Its Sultans in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries CE," in *Court Cultures in the Muslim World: Seventh to the Nineteenth Centuries*, ed. Albrecht Fuess and Jan-Peter Hartung (London: Routledge, 2011), pp. 123–148.

   Luther Obrock brought to my attention the Palam Baoli inscription (dated 1276), which situates itself between Uch (Sanskrit *Uccapuri*) and Delhi (*Yoginipura*). Personal communication and unpublished draft "Reading the Palam Baoli Inscription in the Mercantile Sultanate: Sanskrit in Circulation in North India."
9. A telling account of this is in Jūzjānī's description of his first meeting with Iltutmish's army after their conquest of Uch in 1228. Jūzjānī met the commander, Tajuddin Sanjr Kazlak Khan. Jūzjānī found him surrounded by soldiers and a steward with a severe disposition but a dignified look (*ba manzar muhib o surat-e ba azmat*). On seeing Jūzjānī, Kazlak Khan rose from his seat, took Jūzjānī's hand, and led him to be seated at his own perch. After honoring Jūzjānī, Kazlak Khan presented a red apple to him, saying, "Maulana, take this such that it makes a good omen, and may God's mercy shine on us." There is undoubtedly a symbolic heft to the gift of the red apple—a gesture both to the apple groves of Ghazni and to the orchards planned for Delhi—being presented to Jūzjānī in the alluvial plains of Sind. See Juzjānī, *Tabaqāt-i Nāsirī*, ed. 'Abd Hayy Habibi (Quetta: Silsilah-i Asar-i Habibi, 1949), p. 282.
10. See Sheldon Pollock, *The Language of the Gods in the World of Men: Sanskrit, Culture, and Power in Premodern India* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2006), pp. 12–19.
11. *'Ajam* refers broadly to the nonethnically Arab world and more closely the Persian-speaking world, while *Hind* is the earlier designation for Hindustan or India. I do have concerns about hyphenated linkages between ethnicity and geography (Indo-Aryan, Indo-European, Greco-Roman, etc.) which emerge in the nineteenth century. An early example is in James B. Fraser's *The Persian Adventurer* (1834), which offers this line set in Chandni Chowk in Delhi: "I heard a voice at the door, inquiring in the Indo-Persian language for Ismael Khan Bahadoor." James B. Fraser, *The Persian Adventurer* (London: Henry Colburn and Richard Betley, 1830), p. 191; and Charles E. Trevelyan, Charles E., James Prinsep, John Tytler, Alexander Duff, Henry Thoby Prinsep, *The Application of the Roman Alphabet to All the Oriental Languages* (Calcutta: Serampore Press, 1834). Hence, I remain skeptical about "Indo-Persian" as a contemporary category for scholarship—though colleagues in literary studies have adopted it as a designation for Persian/Persianate in the Indian peninsula. However, from the historian's perspective, and for the

thirteenth century, to designate the space within which literary production in Persian is occurring, I believe we should apply either the *'Ajam-o-Hind* or simply the Persianate. "'Ajam-o-Hind" being a geographic designation is preferable but has limited or no purchase in secondary literature. The late Shahab Ahmed makes a case for "Balkans-to-Bengal" and also notes that "Persianate" detracts from the centrality of Arabic or Sanskrit discursive traditions as well as giving false witness to Iranian nationalism of more contemporary times. I am persuaded by the argument, but this conversation has just begun. For now, we should remember that the Persian cosmopolis was always intimately linked to Arabic and Sanskrit. In other words, literary cultures linked to political worlds always overlapped their attendant geographies. Finally, see Shahab Ahmed, *What is Islam? The Importance of Being Islamic* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2016), pp. 83–85.

12. Such as Firdawsi's *Shahnama*, composed at Ghazna, or the office of the *malik shu'ara*. See Muzaffar Alam, *The Languages of Political Islam: India 1200–1800* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), pp. 116–117.
13. Ibid., pp. 141–143.
14. Andrew C. S. Peacock, *Medieval Islamic Historiography and Political Legitimacy* (New York: Routledge, 2007), p. 76.
15. Ibid., p. 84.
16. Ibid., pp. 100–102.
17. He provides his full genealogy: "Speaking is the weakest of supplicants and the lowest of servants the elderly Muhammad son of Mansur son of Sa'id son of Abi l-Farah son of Jalil son of Ahmad son of Abi Nasr son of Khalaf son of Ahmad son of Shu'ayb son of Talha son of 'Abdallah son of 'Abd Rahman Abi Bakr Siddiq at-Taymi Qurashi (may God bless him), entitled Mubarakshah colloquially known as Fakhr-e Mudabbir." See Fakhr-i Mudabbir, *Ta'rikh-i Fakhru'd-Dín Mubáraksháh*, ed. E. Denison Ross (London: Royal Asiatic Society, 1927), pp. 62–63.
18. Nazir Ahmed, "The Earliest Persian Work Completed in Gujarat," in *The Growth of Indo-Persian Literature in Gujarat*, ed. M. H. Siddiqi (Baroda: M. S. University of Baroda Press, 1985), pp. 1–10.
19. See Sadiduddin Muhammad 'Awfi, *Lubabul al-bab*, ed. Sa'id Nafisi (Tehran: Chap-i Ittihad, 1914), p. 19, p. 2.
20. Ibid., p. 19.
21. *Tabaqát-i Násirí*, p. 155.
22. In the biographies, Juzjani's signaling of nobility, the core of justice, and fealty are key to interpreting his work. His history highlighted the role of commanders and governors in maintaining the kings in Delhi. For example, in his profile of the second ruler of Uch, Saifuddin Aybek Achh, Juzjani noted that after Iltutmish died, he successfully defended the state against other claimants, such as Malik Safiuddin Hussain Karlugh. This was a critical and important victory because it signaled that the late sovereign's key governors had remained loyal to him. See *Tabaqát-i Násirí*, p. 583. On the relationship between governor and rulers, see Ali Anooshahr, "On the Imperial Discourse of the Delhi Sultanate and Early Mughal India," *Journal of Persianate Studies* 7, no. 2 (2014), p. 161.

23. *Tabaqāt-i Nāsirī*, p. 9.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 8.
25. Ibid., p. 10.
26. Ibid., p. 278.
27. Ibid., p. 15.
28. However, two recent works by Nilanjan Sarkar and Blain Auer have opened critical space for thinking about Delhi sultanate histories in affective and literary ways. See Nilanjan Sarkar, "Forbidden Privileges and History-Writing in Medieval India," *The Medieval History Journal* 16:21 (2013), pp. 21–62; and Blain H. Auer, *Symbols of Authority in Medieval Islam: History, Religion and Muslim Legitimacy in the Delhi Sultanate* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2012).
29. *Fathnama-i Sind*, edited by Nabi Baksh Khan Baloch (Lahore: Izhar Sons, 1983), p. 7.
30. Ibid., p. 14.
31. Ibid.
32. Ibid., p. 17.
33. The classic overview of early Arabic narratives remains Tarif Khalidi, *Arabic Historical Thought in the Classical Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994). More specifically on the *futūḥ*, see Jens Scheiner, "Writing the History of *Futūḥ*: The *Futūḥ* Works by Al-Azdī, ibn A'tham, and al-Wāqidī," in *The Linaments of Islam: Studies in Honor of Fred McGraw Donner* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), pp. 151–177.
34. Fred M. Donner, *Narratives of Islamic Origins: The Beginnings of Islamic Historical Writing* (Princeton, NJ: The Darwin Press, 1998), p. 181.
35. See Fred Donner, *The Early Islamic Conquests* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981).
36. As in Miguel Cervantes's twin openings in *Don Quixote*, which claims to be a translation from an Arab text by an unreliable narrator or translator, the elaborate genealogies of translation make the text unstable, allowing Cervantes to claim alternative authoritative voices. Within Persian historiography, another common trope is for the author to claim that the text did not originate with him but was placed at his pen via divine intercession—a dream, or more commonly an encounter with the prophet Khizr. Firdawsi, Nizami, and Juzjani all invoke this trope. See P. Franke, *Begegnung mit Khidr: Quellenstudien zum Imaginären im Traditionellen Islam* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2000).
37. Balādhurī locates the campaigns to Hind and Sind in the early phases of Islamic conquests, during the caliphate of ʿUmar (634–644 CE). He reports on naval expeditions that were launched toward Thana (in Maharashtra) in 636 CE, to Broach (in Gujarat), and to Daybul (in Sind). However, these early campaigns are introduced with a caution: "When they return to ʿUmar, he proclaims: Oh brother of Thaq'aif, you sent ants to aloeswood. If they had been lost, I swear I would have exacted the same number of men from your people (*qaūm*)."

    Aloeswood is the aromatic resin-filled wood of the *Aquillaria agallocha* tree, which is native to India and Southeast Asia. It plays an important role in various social and public rituals in Gulf Arab society to this day. The invocation of a coveted object (the scent of *'ūd* was part of beauty regimes) and danger (the relief at not having lost men) sets the theme for Balādhurī's presentation of this frontier. S. Anya King, "The Importance of Imported Aromatics in Arabic Culture: Illustrations from Pre-Islamic and Early Islamic Poetry," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* vol. 67, no. 3 (July 2008), pp. 175–189.

38. *Fathnama*, p. 10.
39. Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān* (Beirut: Maktaba al-Hilal, 1988), p. 425.
40. *Fathnama*, p. 25.
41. Ibid., p. 35. Emphasis added.
42. Ibid., p. 185.
43. C. E. Bosworth. *The History of Beyhaqi*, vol. 1 (Boston, MA: Ilex Foundation, 2011), p. 178.
44. Ibid., p. 183.
45. Ibid., p. 179.
46. Ibid., p. 183.
47. Henry Cousens, *The Architectural Antiquities of Western India* (London: The India Society, 1926), p. 2.
48. Ibid., p. 82.
49. Ibid., p. 13.
50. The earliest excavations in Sind were carried out in 1854 by A. F. Bellasis and C. M. Richardson, who also cited *Chachnama* in their report, though they reported it as an original Arabic text. See A. F. Bellasis, "An Account of the Ancient and Ruined City of Brahminabad, in Sind," *The Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* vol. 5, no. 20 (1857), p. 416.
51. Cousens, *Antiquities of Sind*, p. 19.
52. Ibid., p. 30.
53. I thank Andrew Ollett for bringing this text to my attention and for sharing his unpublished paper "The Saṃdeśarasaka of ʿAbd ur-Rahman" with me.
54. *Samdeśarasaka of Abdala Rahamana*, edited by H. C. Bhayani (Ahmedabad: Prakrit Text Society, 1999), p. 14. This is easily read as praise in the rhythm and structure evoked from the Qur'an's description of God in surah Hajj: "Hast thou not seen that unto Allah payeth adoration whosoever is in the heavens and whosoever is in the earth, and the sun, and the moon, and the stars, and the hills, and the trees, and the beasts, and many of mankind, while there are many unto whom the doom is justly due. He whom Allah scorneth, there is none to give him honour. Lo! Allah doeth what He will." However, in a similar vein surah Nahl (16:49) reads, "And unto Allah maketh prostration whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth of living creatures, and the angels (also) and they are not proud." Also along these lines is surah Fussilat (41:37): "And of His portents are the night and the day and the sun and the moon. Do not prostrate to the sun or the moon; but prostrate to Allah Who created them, if it is in truth Him Whom ye worship." See *The Glorious Qur'an*, trans. Muhammad M. Pickthall (New York: Muslim World League, 1977), p. 340.
55. *Samdeśarasaka of Abdala Rahamana*, ed. H. C. Bhayani (Ahmedabad: Prakrit Text Society, 1999), p. 16–17.

56. Ibid., p. 19. The distance unit, *yojana*, is five to eight miles.
57. Satish S. Misra, *Muslim Communities in Gujarat* (Baroda: University of Baroda Press, 1964), p. 7. For more on the continuation of these communities after the thirteenth century, the best account is in Samira Sheikh, *Forging a Region: Sultans, Traders and Pilgrims in Gujarat, 1200–1500* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2010).
58. See V. A. Janaki, *Gujarat as the Arabs Knew It (A Study in Historical Geography)* (Baroda: Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda Press, 1969).
59. See the discussion in Travis Zadeh, *Mapping Frontiers across Medieval Islam: Geography, Translation and the 'Abbasid Empire* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2011), pp. 22–25. A useful correction to dominant historiographic readings of Arab geographers is in J. T. Olsson, "The World in Arab Eyes: A Reassessment of the Climes in Medieval Islamic Scholarship," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 77, 3 (Oct. 2014), pp. 487–508.
60. Ibn Khurradādhbih noted that he relied on the report of an anonymous emissary of Yaḥya bin Khalid Barmaki (d. 805), who was sent to Hind to investigate religion in 800 CE. Though the report itself is not extant, its presence is heavily felt in the Arab historiographic tradition centuries after it was written. One can surmise that the consistent invocation of the report in subsequent writings on India is due to the emphasis on chains of transmission in Arab historical writings. See Bruce B. Lawrence, *Shahrāstāni on the Indian Religions* (The Hague: Mouton, 1976), p. 21. In Ibn Khurradādhbih, we see the rules of the geographical genre: the accounts are framed in climes and regions, and then they list each city or settlement, with a description of its main trade and its people. In addition to this nodal alignment of space, the geographies gave a lot more space to ethnographic descriptions of inhabitants and less space to the political conditions. There is no mention in Ibn Khurradādhbih of the political climes in Hind. He does not mention that a key polity was established by the Saffarid brothers Ya'qub and Amr bin Layth, who threatened Baghdad itself in the 870s and were given a grant by the 'Abbasid caliphs over Fars and Sind. These Saffarids took over many cities that Ibn Khurradādhbih catalogs, such as Ghazna, Qusdar, Kikan, Qandabil, and even Multan, holding them until 900 CE. See C. E. Bosworth, "Rulers of Makran and Qusdar in the Early Islamic Period," in *Studia Iranica* vol. 23 (1994), pp. 199–209; and M. S. Khan, "The Five Arab States in South Asia," *Hamdard Islamicus* vol. 15, no. 2 (1992), pp. 5–28.

    Similarly, though Ibn Khurradādhbih catalogs the religions of Hind, he does not mention the rebels and anti-'Abbasid missionaries who populated Sind. For Hind and Sind, there is also a special emphasis on capturing descriptions of wonders and marvels. It is notable that in the prodigious scholarship on Ibn Khurradādhbih (and on the later geographers), there is little thought given to how space on the Indic frontier is imagined and presented or on what the temporal and empirical lags say about the political and cultural constructions in 'Abbasid textual traditions. See, for instance, Zayde Antrim, *Routes and Realms: The Power of Place in the Early Islamic World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012); and James E. Montgomery, "Serendipity, Resistance, and Multivalency: Ibn Khurradādhbih and His *Kitab*

Masalik wa-l-mamalik," in Philip F. Kennedy, ed. *On Fiction and Adab Medieval Arabic Literature* (Weisbaden: Harrossowitz Verlag, 2005), pp. 177–233.

61. Abū'l Qasim ʿUbayd Allah bin ʿAbd Allah Ibn Khurradādhbih. *Kitāb al-Masālik wa-l-Mamālik* ed. M. J. de Goeje. (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1967), p. 64
62. Ibid., p. 67.
63. Ibid.
64. Consider Inden's reading of Balhara and Rashtrakuta polity as an argument against colonial depictions of medieval India as a dark and desolate political space. In Ronald B. Inden, *Imagining India* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), pp. 253–63.
65. Abu Hasan Ali bin Husayn Masʿūdī, *Murūj Dhahab wa-Maʿādin Jawāhir* (Beirut: Dar Kutub ʿIlmiyya, 1985), vol. 1, p. 99
66. Ibid., p. 99.
67. See Z. A. Desai, "Arabic Inscriptions of the Rajput period from Gujarat," *Epigraphica Indica: Arabic and Persian Supplement*, 1961, pp. 1–24; and D. C. Sircar, "Rāshṭrakūta Charters from Chinchani," *Epigraphia Indica*, vol. 32, pp. 56–57.
68. Sadiduddin Muhammad ʿAwfi, *Jawami Hikayat wa Lawami Ravayat*, ed. Muhammad Muin, vol. 2 (Tehran: Ibn Sina Press, 1961), p. 9.
69. Ibid., p. 10.
70. Zakariyā ibn Muḥammad Qazwīnī, *Asar al-Bilād wa-Akhbār al- ʿIbād* (Tehran: Muʾassasah-i ʿIlmī Andīshah-i Javān, 1987), p. 85.
71. Peter Hardy, "Is the *Chach Nama* Intelligible to the Historian as Political Theory?" in *Sind through the Centuries*, ed. Hamida Khuhro (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1981), pp. 111–117.
72. See Cynthia Talbot, *Precolonial India in Practice: Society, Region, and Identity in Medieval Andhra* (New York, Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 43; and Yasmin Saikia, *In the Meadows of Gold: Telling Tales of the Swargadeos at the Crossroads of Assam* (Guwahati: Spectrum Publications, 1997), p. 173.

3. DEAR SON, WHAT IS THE MATTER WITH YOU?

1. Personal communication, author notes, March 2011. As I listened to Murad Sahib, I immediately thought that ʿAwfi's biographical dictionary of Persian poets, *Lubabul Albab*, mentions immortality for a writer whose pen can find the *Ab-e Hayat*.
2. It is not enough for me to understand that Murad Sahib is an individual based in a marketplace whose services are crucial to the functioning of the community in Uch. His ability to draft petitions, letters, wills, and testimonies and his social standing are intricately linked in a political economy. However, when I step away from that framework and wish to understand the relationship between Murad Sahib and his community in the context of the history of Uch, I must turn toward this dialogue between texts and space. The question of "understanding" in the sense evoked by Gadamer is crucial to my approach here—the material, the textual, the translated textual, and the oral. In Gadamer's view, understanding requires a return to the text for "what [the author] would have wanted to say to me if I had been

his original interlocutor." See Diane P. Michelfelder and Richard E. Palmer, eds., *Dialogue and Deconstruction: The Gadamer-Derrida Encounter* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), p. 35.

3. *Fathnama*, p. 12.
4. Ibid., p. 13.
5. Ibid., presumably referring to Rg, Yajur, Sama, and Atharva.
6. Ibid., p. 29.
7. Precisely as the astrologer uses the four quadrants of the sky to predict the rule of Dahar, so does Hajjaj bin Yusuf later in the text. *Chachnama* recounts that Hajjaj bin Yusuf had just received word that his campaign to conquer Sind had failed and that his commander Budail had died in combat. At that point another commander, ʿUmar bin Abdallah, sends a message asking that the campaign in Hind be given to him, but Hajjaj bin Yusuf replies, "You are full of greed. I have asked the astrologers (*manajuman*) to calculate, and I have myself drawn lots from the Book (*qur'at andakhtah*), and the polity (*vilayat*) of Hind will be conquered at the hands of Amir ʿImaduddin Muhammad bin Qasim Thaqafi," (*Fathnama*, p. 67).

   Divination via the drawing of lots and geomancy are integral to advice literature. Its presence in *Chachnama* helps orient the reader to its genre. For a general survey on divination in medieval Islam, see Toufic Fahd, *La Divination Arabe. Etudes Religieuses, Sociologiques et Folkloriques sur le Milieu Natif de l'Islam* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1966); and Emilie Savage-Smith and Marion B. Smith, *Islamic Geomancy and a Thirteenth-Century Divinatory Device* (Malibu, CA: Undena Publications, 1980). As with Dahar, for Hajjaj there is a matter of succession after the death of Budail, and this matter is approached by locating divine will.
8. *Fathnama*, p. 39. The word used for leaders (*imaman*) is critical because although it is normally reserved for spiritual leaders—for both Shi'a and Sunni Muslims—here it applies to poets, writers, and Brahmins.
9. Ibid., p. 39.
10. Ibid., p. 40.
11. For example, the body is explicitly made social: "Knowing this, that teeth, claws and men, removed from their place, appear not to advantage, a prudent man should not quit his own station," (Ludwik Sternbach, "Cāṇakya's Aphorisms in the *Hitopadeśa* (I)," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* vol. 76, no. 2 (Apr.–Jun. 1956), p. 124).
12. *Fathnama*, p. 40.
13. Ibid., p. 42.
14. In various parts of *Chachnama*, we have some indications of the material reality of these letters. For example, during the initial phase of Qasim's campaign, a letter arrived from the capital every day and then every three days, and finally one letter took nine days to reach the capital (*Dar al-Khilafah*, which refers to Baghdad). Also, the text indicates that the letters between Dahar and Qasim were translated by a scribe (*munshi*).
15. *Fathnama*, p. 93.
16. Ibid., p. 93.
17. Ibid., p. 94.

18. Ibid., p. 95.
19. Ibid., p. 141.
20. Ibid., p. 85.
21. Ibid., p. 88.
22. Hajjaj is often harsh in his speech to Qasim, insisting on proving that Qasim is merely a child who is ever in the danger of being taken advantage of. For example: "I am repulsed by you. Your governance is strange to me. You seem to really want to grant amnesty. Before being tested, the enemy who appeals for peace or declares intention to fight cannot be treated equally; the good and the bad do not deserve similar treatment. By treating them similarly, you only prove your lack of intelligence, and the enemy will take advantage of that. I swear on my head and my life that God has given you the ability to think, but you do not utilize it, and your entire attention is geared toward giving everyone amnesty without due consideration" (*Fathnama*, p. 114).
23. See J. W. McCrindle, *Ancient India as Described by Ktesias the Knidian* (London: Trübner and Co., 1882); and J. W. McCrindle, *Ancient India as Described by Megasthenes and Arrian* (London: Trübner and Co., 1877).
24. For an excellent overview, see Rudolf Wittkower, "Marvels of the East: A Study in the History of Monsters," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 5 (1942), pp. 159–197. The logical extension of India as a site of immense wealth and immense wisdom is the emergence, in medieval accounts, of descriptions which place Paradise "in or beyond" India, "in the desert, impassable for people, in the oriental zone."See Natalie Lozovsky, *The Earth Is Our Book: Geographical Knowledge in the Latin West ca. 400–1000* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000), p. 59. Such linkages prospered into other supernatural geographies, as in the thirteenth-century long poem *L'Image du Monde* or the Hereford Mappa Mundi, as well as in the development of the rich mythography of Prester John.
25. Andy Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies: Studies in the Monsters of the Beowulf Manuscript* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1995), p. 229.
26. The Pahlavi origins of the text, and its translation into Syriac and then Arabic before being disseminated as *Secretum Secretorum*, is a topic with a plethora of available scholarship. Most prominent is Mario Grignaschi's "La *Siyāstu-l-Āmmiyya* et l'Influence Iranienne sur la Pensée Politique Islamique," in *Acta Iranica* 6, Deuxième Série, Monumentum H. S. Nyberg, III, Tehran-Liège: Bibliothèque Pahlavi (1975), pp. 33–287. For an overview, see Regula Forster, *Das Geheimnis der Geheimnisse: Die Arabischen und Deutschen Fassungen des Pseudo-Aristotelischen* Sirr al-Asrar, Secretum Secretorum (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 2006). A recent examination by Miklós Maróth lays out some of the themes present in the *Letter*, which range from a general introduction to moral and political philosophy, with an emphasis on questions of governance (such as the treatment of Persian prisoners and taxation). See Miklós Maróth, *The Correspondence between Aristotle and Alexander the Great: An Anonymous Greek Novel in Letters in Arabic Translation* (Piliscsaba: The Avicenna Institute of Middle Eastern Studies, 2006).
27. See Paul Weinfield, "The Islamic Alexander: A Religious and Political Theme in Arabic and Persian Literature," Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University,

2008; and Faustina Doufikar-Aerts, *Alexander Magnus Arabicus: Survey of the Alexander Tradition through Seven Centuries: From Pseudo-Callisthenes to Suri* (Paris-Leuven: Peeters, 2010).

28. See Samuel Miklos Stern, "The Arabic Translations of the Pseudo-Asistotelian Treatise *De Mundo*," *Le Muséon*, vol. 77, 1964, pp. 187–204.
29. See Abu Ja'far Tabari, *Ta'rikh al-Rusul wa al-Muluk*, vol. l (Misr: Dar al-Ma'arif, 1960), pp. 570–75; or Moshe Perlmann, *The History of al-Ṭabarī: The Ancient Kingdoms* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987), pp. 87–95.
30. See Minoo Southgate, *Iskandarnamah: A Persian Medieval Alexander-Romance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978).
31. See J. S. Meisami, "The Past in Service of the Present: Two Views of History in Medieval Persia," *Poetics Today* 14:2 (1993), pp. 247–275.
32. See Ghulam Husayn Baygdili, *Chihrah-i Iskandar dar Shahnama-i Firdawsi o Iskandarnama-i Nizami* (Tehran: Mowalif ba Hamkari Intasharat Afr'enish, 1990), p. 30.
33. An overview of the contours of scholarship is available in Louise Marlow, "Advice and Advice Literature," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, ed. Gudrun Krämer, Denis Matringe, John Nawas, Everett Rowson. See specifically, J. S. Meisami, *Persian Historiography to the End of the Twelfth Century* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999); and Dimitri Gutas, *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture: The Graeco-Roman Translation Movement in Baghdad and Early 'Abbasid Society, 2nd–4th/8th–10th Century* (London: Routledge, 1999). Most recently, the work of Neguin Yavari is promising to reopen the debate in fruitful ways. See Neguin Yavari, *Advice for the Sultan: Prophetic Voices and Secular Politics in Medieval Islam* (London: Hurst and Company, 2014). The *Fürstenspiegel*, or "Mirror for Princes," genre in the Indian context suffers from collapsing the distinction between the *adāb* and *akhlāq* (moral virtues), as Muzaffar Alam has noted. See Muzaffar Alam, "Akhlāqī Norms and Mughal Governance," in *The Making of Indo-Persian Culture: Indian and French Studies*, ed. Muzaffar Alam et al. (New Delhi: Manohar Publishers and Distributors, 2000), pp. 67–95.
34. Hence in the excellent recent works on Barani by Raziuddin Aquil, Nilanjan Sarkar, and Vasileios Syros, the question of how Barani's text converses with earlier texts and how the earlier texts may be visible or available to the audience is not addressed. See Raziuddin Aquil, "On Islam and Kufr in the Delhi Sultanate: Towards a Re-interpretation of Ziya' al-Din Barani's *Fatawa-i Jahandari*," *Rethinking a Millennium: Perspectives on Indian History from the Eighth to Eighteenth Century: Essays for Harbans Mukhia*, ed. Rajat Data (Delhi: Aakar Books, 2008), pp. 168–198; Nilanjan Sarkar, "The Voice of Maḥmūd': The Hero in Ziyā Baranī's *Fatāwā-i Jahāndārī*," *Medieval History Journal* 9 (2006), pp. 327–356; and Vasileios Syros, "Indian Emergencies: Baranī's *Fatāwā-i Jahāndārī*, the Diseases of the Body Politic, and Machiavelli's *accidenti*." *Philosophy East and West* 62.4 (2012), pp. 545–573.
35. Though references to it and excerpts from it circulated widely in many Sanskrit commentaries and critiques across medieval India, there was no full text for the *Arthasastra* until the twentieth century. In 1904 in Mysore, a

pandit gave Dr. R. Shamasastry the full text of *Arthasastra*, written on palm leaves in the Grantha script. Shamasastry published the text in 1909, and an English translation followed in 1915. It was then that the text entered philological inquiry. As well, the process of inquiry that established the text as "native" political theory and the establishment of its putative author Canakya as an "Indian" political philosopher speaking to a Brahminical Indian king. *Arthasastra* contains 15 books, comprising 150 chapters, with roughly 6,000 verses in total. The first five books deal with the training of the king and his daily routines, administrators, laws, crime, taxation, salaries, etc. In other words, the books deal with the domestic affairs of the bureaucracy. Books seven through thirteen focus on foreign policy, diplomacy, war, conquest, and governance over the conquered. The last books deal with occult and philosophic practices. See L. N. Rangarajan, *The Arthashastra* (Delhi: Penguin Books, 1992), pp. 114–115.

36. Prathama Banerjee's reading of *Arthasastra* as a colonial text which is invoked as political theory is apt and is important if we are to understand the afterlife of this text. See Prathama Banerjee, "Chanakya/Kautilya: History, Philosophy, Theater and the Twentieth-Century Political," *History of the Present*, vol. 2, no. 1 (spring 2012), pp. 24–51.
37. Rangarajan, *The Arthashastra*, pp. 2, 10, 47.
38. The king, Arthasastra states, is from noble birth, has intellect, is willing to learn, is brave and resourceful, is eloquent and bold, is well trained in arts and governance, is sweet in speech, and is without passion, anger, greed, and fickleness. Most importantly, the king should follow the advice of his counselor. The advisor should be of the highest rank, a native of the land, trained in all arts and logics, and able to provide governance guidance to the king. "Only a king who is wise, disciplined, devoted to a just governing of the subjects and ever conscious of the welfare of all beings will enjoy the earth unopposed." See Rangarajan, *The Arthashastra*, p. 143.
39. Yigal Bronner, "Review of *The Bawd's Counsel: Being an Eighth-Century Verse Novel in Sanskrit by Dāmodaragupta*, ed. and transl., Csaba Dezső and Dominic Goodall," *Indo-Iranian Journal* 58, no. 1 (2015), pp. 79–86.
40. A. Venkatasubbiah, "Pancatantra Studies," *Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute*, vol. 15, no. 1/2 (1933–34), pp. 39–66.
41. See Patrick Olivelle, *Pancatantra: The Book of India's Folk Wisdom* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 120–122.
42. *Fathnama*, p. 45.

4. A DEMON WITH RUBY EYES

1. For an overview of conversion accounts, see Simon Digby, "Anecdotes of a Provincial Sufi of the Delhi Sultanate, Khwāja Gurg of Kara," *Iran* 32 (1994), pp. 99–109. Digby argues that narratives conversion are split in two broad frameworks: the individual who converts after a personal encounter with the divine, and the civic community in a particular space (village, neighborhood, etc.) that converts after witnessing a display of his miraculous powers (*karamāt*), often in contention with a rival. Contemporary histories of conversion to Islam focus on specific regions. They take textual data and aug-

ment it with material and epigraphic data to arrive at an understanding of conversion of regions to Islam. The work of Richard M. Eaton on Bengal and Deccan is foundational for a host of scholarship. See Richard M. Eaton, *The Rise of Islam and the Bengal Frontier, 1204–1760* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993). An excellent recent example is Ramya Sreenivasan, "Faith and Allegiance in the Mughal Era: Perspectives from Rajasthan," in Vasudha Dalmia and Munis Faruqui, eds., *Religious Interactions in Mughal India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp. 159–195.

2. I am drawing here on scholarship on Christian sacral sites in early Christianity, summarized in Ora Limor, "Conversion of Space," in Ira Katznelson and Miri Rubin, eds., *Religious Conversion: History, Experience and Meaning* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2014), pp. 31–61; and Oded Irshai, "The Christian Appropriation of Jerusalem in the Fourth Century: The Case of the Bordeaux Pilgrim," *Jewish Quarterly Review* vol. 99, no. 4 (fall 2009), pp. 465–486.
3. The incongruity of Hindu "graves"—as public cremation grounds are not available—speaks as much to the memorialization ethos of intercultural pasts in the landscape as it does to the inherent impossibility of ritual sites dedicated to an invisible minority population.
4. There are, however, any number of *'urs* or *mela* (carnivals) that celebrate Hindu saints. An important one is the annual "Channan Pir" *mela*, which is held in the Cholistan desert outside Derawar Fort. The story of Channan Pir, as narrated in *Hadaqah al-Aulīya*, goes that Surkh Posh was traveling near the Derawar Fort, whose ruler was a Hindu raja. The raja had no progeny, and he asked the Sufi to pray for him. Surkh Posh prayed that a Muslim *wali allah* [Regent of God] would be born in Derawar Fort. The raja was incensed, and when the child was born, it was abandoned in the desert. Yet days later, local Hindus found the child healthy, having been nourished by a deer. The child grew up and became a *pir* [Sufi] venerated by both Hindus and Muslims. His annual *mela* is said to attract all faiths and sects. Such stories of a composite (or related) past are very common at all of the Sufi shrines. See Ghulam Sarvar Lahori, *Hadīqah al-Auliyā: Panjāb ke Akābir Sūfiyah ka Mustanad Tazkirah* (Lahore: Islamic Book Foundation, 1976), p. 66.
5. For two such arguments, see K. A. Nizami, *Some Aspects of Religion and Politics in India during the Thirteenth Century* (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1961); and Derryl Maclean, *Religion and Society in Arab Sind* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1989).
6. *Fathnama*, p. 30.
7. Ibid., p. 31.
8. Ibid., p. 32.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid., p. 33.
12. Baladhūrī, *Futūh Buldān*, p. 382.
13. Istakhri, *Kitab al-Masaik wa-l-Mamalik*, M. J. de Goeje, ed. (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1967), p. 174.
14. Birunī, *Taḥqīq mā li'l Hind* (Beirut: 'Alam al-Kitāb, 1983), p. 312.

15. For a fuller exposition of Hindu subjects in Mahmud's court and army, see Finbarr B. Flood, *Objects of Translation: Material Culture and Medieval "Hindu-Muslim" Encounter* (Delhi: Permanent Black, 2009).
16. *Fathnama*, p. 173.
17. Ibid., p. 184.
18. Ibid., p. 185.
19. A beautifully photographed recent travel diary by Annie Ali Khan illuminates this landscape. See Annie Ali Khan, "A Hindu Pilgrimage in Pakistan," accessed January 2016, on *Roads & Kingdoms*. http://roadsandkingdoms.com/2016/a-hindu-pilgrimage-in-pakistan.
20. Shaikh Khurdhid Hasan, "Origin of Chaukhandi Tombs," *Journal of Pakistan Historical Society* (April 1976), pp. 98–107.
21. As cited in Shaikh Khurshid Hasan, "Inscriptions from Chaukhandi Tombs," *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society* (Oct.–Dec. 2011), pp. 121–123.
22. For a nuanced look at the role of captured men and women who were trained for elite roles, see Sunil Kumar, "*Bandagī* and *Naukarī*: Studying transitions in Political Culture and Service under the North Indian Sultanates, 13–16th centuries," in Francesca Orsini and Samira Sheikh, eds., *After Timur Came* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp. 60–108.
23. This essay by Rizvi is an often-cited and highly influential study. It was first published in 1977, revised and enlarged in 1991, and republished again in 2010. S. A. A. Rizvi, "Islamic Proselytization: Seventh to Sixteenth Century," in Raziuddin Aquil, ed., *Sufism and Society in Medieval India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 52–70.
24. See Derryl N. Maclean, *Religion and Society in Arab Sind* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1989). My chief disagreement with Maclean is on his understanding of *Chachnama*; I find the remainder of his study to be exemplary.
25. *Fathnama*, p. 101.
26. Ibid., p. 102.
27. Ibid., p. 180.
28. Ibid., pp. 25–27.
29. Ibid., p. 166.
30. Ibid., p. 168.
31. Ibid.
32. Ibid., p. 181.
33. Baba Farid's ascetic practice of suspension (*chilla-e makhus*) is also reflected in sirsasana, part of the Hatha yoga and Vaishnavite yogic practices. See James Mallinson, *The Khecarīvidyā of Ādinātha* (London: Routledge, 2007). For a depiction of the practice by a Sufi, see the illustrated manuscript of Jami's (1604) held at Museo Lázaro Galdiano, viewable at http://goo.gl/aLtIDt. See also Khaliq Ahmed Nizami, *The Life and Times of Shaikh Farid-u'd Din Ganj-i Shakar* (Aligarh: Aligarh University Press, 1955), p. 89.
34. Farid is one of the four friends (*char yaar*), along with other Chishti saints Bahauddin Zakariya of Multan (1170–1267), Lal Shahbaz Qalandar of Sehwan (1177–1274), and Jalaluddin Bukhari of Uch (ca. 1192–1294).
35. Illahdiyeh ibn 'Abd al-Rahim Chishti Usmani, as recorded in *Siyar al-Aqtab* (Lucknow, India: Naval Kishur, 1881), pp. 167–69.

36. See the two seminal papers by Digby on such encounters. The papers locate the question of narration, tropes, and prestige in these anecdotes. Simon Digby, "Encounters with Jogis in Indian Sufi Hagiography" (lecture at the Seminar on Aspects of Religion in South Asia, University of London, Jan. 1970); and "To Ride a Tiger or a Wall? Strategies of Prestige in Indian Sufi Legend," in *According to Tradition: Hagiographical Writing in India*, Winand Callewaert and Rupert Snell, eds. (Wiesbaden, Germany: Harrasowitz Verlag, 1994), pp. 99–129.
37. Balādhurī provides a genealogy of Jāt or Zūt, who are considered rebellious. Balādhurī reports that they are a people captured in the conquest of Sind and Khurusan and relocated to Iraq (along with their water buffalo), where they establish themselves as highway robbers and brigands.
38. *Fathnama*, p. 41.
39. The marriage is only alluded to in letters between Dahar and his brother, where the case for Dahar's marriage is made. "Even though Bai is our father's daughter, she is, in fact, the daughter of Jats, and they are a rebellious and criminal people (*mukhalif o mujram*), especially their women. If you study reality, you will see that they cannot be trusted, and they are far from being honest and devout. Consider the saying about the Jats: 'Whoever catches the foot of a goat can milk her, and whoever catches the arm of a Jat woman can mount her.' Hence, due to her foreignness by birth (*mizaj ajnabi*), this marriage would be valid. Still, I swear to you that I will not let any pollution come between us, and I will do all matters to your liking." (*Fathnama*, p. 44).
40. Ibid., p. 163.

5. THE HALF SMILE

1. There are no female saints in more than twenty biographies in Masood Hasan Shahab's study *Khita Pak-e Uch* (Bahawalpur: Urdu Academy, 1968).
2. An example of such a dismissal is in N. A. Baloch, "End of Imad-ud-din Muhammad ibn Qasim, the Arab Conqueror of Sind," *Islamic Culture* vol. 19 no. 1 (1945), pp. 54–66.
3. Such readings are not restricted to historians observing primary texts in the *tari'kh* genre. They exist even in the *adab* genre, where the severest reading was by Fedwa Malti-Douglas in *Womens' Body, Woman's Word: Gender and Discourse in Arabo-Islamic Writing* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991), which posited an exclusively male writer who used women as marginal characters, highlighting their sexual licentiousness and cunning in the social and political realm. This reading was challenged by Julie Meisami and later Marlé Hammond, who both pointed toward a plethora of female authors as well as nuances in the depiction of women in literature that complicated Malti-Douglas's reading. See Julie Meisami, "Writing Medieval Women," in Julia Brey (ed.), *Writing and Representation in Medieval Islam* (London: Routledge, 2006), pp. 47–87; Marlé Hammond, *Beyond Elegy: Classical Arabic Women's Poetry in Context* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010). I should make clear that I am not making the claim that *Chachnama* presents a woman's voice. Nor am I making a claim toward any "voice."

Rather, in its depiction of women characters, *Chachnama* does not generally follow the conventions of *tari'kh* or *adab* literature.

4. *Fathnama*, p. 14.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid., p. 15.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid., p. 16.
9. Ibid., p. 19.
10. Ibid., p. 169.
11. Ibid., p. 170.
12. Ibid., p. 173.
13. Ibid., p. 171.
14. Ibid., p. 188.
15. Ibid.
16. Uncured leather contracts as it dries and would crush anyone sewn inside it.
17. *Fathnama*, p. 188.
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid.
20. Ibid., p. 190.
21. Accounts from medieval Europe also describe the punishment of immurement. The early-thirteenth-century writer Der Stricker, writer of Roland's song cycles, Arthurian legends, and the comic tales known as the Mären, often featured women in clever and witty combative roles with their husbands and their towns. One of Stricker's stories is "Die Eingemauerte Frau" (The Walled Woman). Though immurement here is a punishment, the woman who is constantly rebuking her husband has a religious conversion while entombed and is released by the Holy Spirit. The immurement of women (and children) in walls is a common motif in other foundation legends, as explicated by Alan Dundes in *The Walled-Up Wife: A Casebook* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1996).
22. *Fathnama*, p. 179.
23. Ibid., p. 175.
24. Ibid.
25. *Tabaqat-i Nasiri*, p. 535.
26. Ibid., p. 536.
27. Ibid., p. 498. In fact, a reading of that account puts Mohammad Bakhtiyar Khilji in a much more ethically dubious light than the raja. Bakhtiyar's warfare is shown as unethical and devoid of respect for civilians—whether Muslim or Hindu—while the raja always acts in the best interests of his subjects.
28. The text shares much in form and content with *Chachnama* as it attempts to create a political theory for an intertwined elite of the early-fourteenth-century Delhi sultanate. See Michael Boris Bednar, "The Content and the Form in Amīr Khusraw's *Duval Rānī va Khiẓr Khān*," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 24, I (2014), pp. 17–35.
29. I am reading transgression here, following Michel Foucault, as "an action which involves the limit, that narrow zone of a line where it displays the

flash of its passage, perhaps also its entire trajectory, even its origin." Just as Foucault reads transgression as a "flash of lightening," I read the account of the daughters as an act that illuminates the morally bankrupt center via an immoral action and that also illuminates the morality of that just action. See Michel Foucault, "Preface to Transgression," *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, trans. Donald F. Bouchard and Sherry Simon. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1977), p. 35. My thanks to Durba Mitra for this reference and this line of thought.

30. For a full explication, see Peter Jackson, "Sultan Radiyya bint Iltutmish," in *Women in the Medieval Islamic World: Power, Patronage, and Piety*, ed. Gavin Hambly (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), pp. 181–197; and Alyssa Gabbay, "In Reality a Man: Sultan Iltutmish, His Daughter, Raziya, and Gender Ambiguity in Thirteenth Century Northern India," *Journal of Persianate Studies* 4 (2011), pp. 45–63.
31. 'Ain al-Mālak Abdullāh Māhrū, *Inshā-i Māhrū*. (Lahore: Intishārāt-i Taḥqiqāt-i Pakistān, 1965), p. 233.
32. Ibid.
33. Thomas Hood, *The Daughters of King Daher: A Story of the Mohammedan Invasion of Scinde, and Other Poems* (London: Saunders, Otley, and Co., 1861), p. 50.
34. Ayaz's poem came at the height of anti-Pakistan Sindhi nationalism in the late 1970s and early 1980s—the aftermath of the 1971 massacre in East Pakistan by the military regime in West Pakistan. This was the reaction of most minority driven political consciousness under Pakistan's totalitarian military state after the creation of Bangladesh. Counter-nationalist claims began immediately in Baluchistan and Sind, leading to civil and military crackdowns in 1974–1976 and 1980–1982. Even in Uch a Serai'ki national claim emerged in the mid-1980s, and it continues to this day. I have made some changes to the translation. Compare with Fahmida Riaz, *Pakistan: Literature and Society* (New Delhi: Patriot Publishers, 1986), p. 19.
35. In juxtaposing spatially and temporally separated episodes in certain historically disjunctive moments, I draw upon the work of Reinhart Koselleck, who read nonsimultaneous pasts simultaneously. This was his notion of Gleichzeitigkeit des Ungleichzeitigen. See Reinhart Koselleck, *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), p. 95; and Reinhart Koselleck, "Einleitung," in *Zeitschichten. Studien zur Historik* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 2000), pp. 9–16.
36. See Imtiaz Ali Taj, *Anārkali* (Lahore: Ferozesons Publishers, 1962), p. 3.
37. Syed Muhammad Latif, *Lahore: Its History, Architectural Remains, and Antiquities* (Lahore: New Imperial Press, 1892), p. 186.
38. Shireen Moosavi provides a good overview of the legend and the possibility of who Anarkali may have been. "In 1596, Prince Salim is reported to have fallen violently in love with the daughter of Zain Khan Koka, the foster brother of Akbar and a high noble. For some reason, Akbar did not approve of the match and a rift occurred between the father and the son. Salim's infatuation was, however, so intense that Akbar yielded to the persuasion of his mother Hamida Bano, and the wedding took place in her apartments on

8 Tir 41 R.Y./AH 1004 (29 June 1596). It is, thus, probable that the rumor mill got hold of Salim's dispute with his father on a marital issue. Within four months of Salim's marriage with Zain Khan Koka's daughter, in the evening of 26 Mehr of the same year (19 October 1596), the mother of Prince Dānyāl died; the very next day an 'old' concubine of Akbar passed away and a day after, on 28 Mehr (21 October 1596), Prince Salim's wife, who was the daughter of Rāja 'Alī Khān, the ruler of Khandesh, died. She had been sent by her father, in token of submission, at the end of April 1593, on the persuasion of Akbar's envoy, the poet Faizī, to marry Prince Salim, the heir apparent. It is possible that the deaths of Dānyāl's mother and Salim's wife with the difference of two days caused their identities to be confused, Dānyāl's mother being confounded with Jahāngīr's wife, for whom Jahāngīr's inscribed declarations of love were really intended. The confusion may have been aided by the fact that Dānyāl's mother had been a concubine (*khawwās*) of Akbar, and there is, therefore, a possibility that she might have originally borne the harem name of Anār-kalī." See Shireen Moosavi, "The Invention and Persistence of a Legend—The Anārkalī Story," in *Studies in People's History* 1, 1 (2014), pp. 63–68.

39. Among the rare works to pay attention to the political lives of Mughal women is Ruby Lal's *Domesticity and Power in the Early Mughal World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

6. A CONQUEST OF PASTS

1. On the significance and history of long graves (*nau gaz*) in West Asia, see Brannon M. Wheeler, *Mecca and Eden: Ritual, Relics, and Territory in Islam* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), pp. 100–22.
2. For al-Ansari, see David Shulman, "Muslim Popular Literature in Tamil: The Tamirmancari Malai,"in Yohanan Friedmann, ed., *Islam in Asia: South Asia*, vol. 1 (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1980), pp. 174-207.; and David Cook, "Tamīm al-Dārī," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, University of London, 61, no. 1 (1998), pp. 20–28. For Dīnār, see G. S. Khwaja, "An Arabic Epigraph Pertaining to Early Islamic Mission to Kerala," *Journal of the Epigraphical Society of India* vol. 25, 1999, pp. 54–58.
3. For explication of some of these stories, see Masood Hasan Shahab, *Khitā Pak-e Uch* (Bahawalpur: Urdu Academy, 1968).
4. See Abu'l-Fazl, *The History of Akbar*, ed. and trans. Wheeler M. Thackston, vol. 1, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015), pp. 47–70 and 559–571.
5. Muhammad Masum Bakkari, *Ta'rīkh-i Sind—Best Known as Ta'rīkh-i-Ma'ṣūmī* (Poona: Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, 1938), p. 4.
6. Ibid., p. 22.
7. Qaniʿ authored more than forty-two works, including numerous compendia of his own poetry (he excelled in the *mathnavi* and *qasida*); a dictionary of Persian poets in Sind, *Muq'allat-e Shur'a* (1760); a history from the 'Abbasid reign, *Tar'ikh-i 'Abbasi* (1761); and a unique cultural history of Sind, incorporating everything from fashion to culinary skills and means of relaxation, *Nisab ul-Bulgha* (1783). *Tuhfat ul-Kiram* (1761) comprises three volumes. The

first volume deals with the history of the prophets down to the early caliphs. The second volume is divided into seven sections, each section containing histories of cities and towns in Sind, along with descriptions of the spiritual and ruling elite. The third volume is dedicated to the history of Sind, from Chach to the Sindhi Kalhora regime, contemporary to Qaniʿ.

8. The best scholarly treatment of Firishta is in Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *Courtly Encounters: The Courtliness and Violences of Early Modern Eurasia* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012), pp. 34–103.
9. See Muhammad Qasim Hindu Shah Astarābādi Firishtā, *Ta'rīkh-i Firishtā* (Tehran: Anjuman-i Āsār va Mafākhir-i Farhangi, 2009).
10. It is little discussed, but Firishta presents a complex theory of historiography, providing criteria for how kings, cities, and regions should be assembled in a broad universal history. Take, for example, his insistence that Qabacha not be mentioned in the rise of the Delhi sultans but should rather be included in the accounts of Sind. Firishta is here commenting directly on Juzjani's *Tabaqat* and later universal histories.
11. It was Ham, son of Adam, Firishta writes, whose six sons—Hind, Sind, Jaish, Afranj, Hormuz, and Buiya—laid the foundation of a city in Hindustan.
12. Alexander Dow, *The History of Hindostan; from the Earliest Account of Time, to the Death of Akbar; Translated from the Persian of Mahummud Casim Ferishta of Delhi: Together with a Dissertation Concerning the Religion and Philosophy of the Brahmins; With an Appendix, Containing the History of the Mogul Empire, from Its Decline in the Reign of Mahummud Shaw, to the Present Times* (London: T. Becket and P. A. de Hondt, 1768), p. ii.
13. Ibid., p. vi.
14. Ibid., p. xiii.
15. Alexander Dow, *The History of Hindostan, from the Death of Akbar, to the Complete Settlement of the Empire under Aurungzebe. To Which Are Prefixed, I. A Dissertation on the Origin and Nature of Despotism in Hindostan. II. An Enquiry into the State of Bengal; With a Plan for Restoring That Kingdom to Its Former Prosperity and Splendor* (London: T. Becket and P. A. de Hondt in the Strand, 1772), p. xv.
16. Ibid., p. xxxv.
17. See Adrian Duarte, *The History of British Relations with Sind, 1613–1843* (Karachi: National Book Foundation, 1976).
18. Such treaty arrangements to exclude Americans and other Europeans were standard clauses in East India Company's dealings with the Princely States. For Sind, see the treaties in 1809 and 1820 in *Parliamentary Papers, Reports and Committees: East India Company's Affairs*, vol. 14 (London: H.M. Stationary Office, 1831–1832), p. 202. For Crow, see Mubarak Ali, ed., *Crow's Account of Sindh* (Karachi: Fiction House, 2004).
19. C. U. Aitchison, *A Collection of Treaties, Engagements, and Sanads Relating to India and Neighboring Countries*, vol. 7 (Calcutta: Office of the Superintendent of Government Printing, 1892), pp. 308–309.
20. Alexander Burnes, *Travels into Bokhara: Being the Account of a Journey from India to Cabool, Tartary and Persia; also, Narrative of a Voyage on the*

Indus, from the Sea to Lahore (Philadelphia: E. L. Carey and A. Hart, 1835), p. 36.

21. Edward Law Ellenborough, "Proclamation from the Governor-General to All the Princes and Chiefs and People of India," *The Annual Register, or a View of the History and Politics of the Year 1842*, ed. Edmund Burke (London: J. G. F. and J. Rivington, 1843), pp. 252–256.
22. William F. P. Napier, *The Life and Opinions of General Sir Charles James Napier*, vol. 2 (London: John Murray, 1857), p. 275.
23. In his disavowal of native languages, Napier evoked a previous conqueror, Lord Clive. Lewis Smith wrote in the introduction to his translation of *Qissa Chahar Dervish*, "Clive never knew the languages of India. When asked why he never learnt it, he replied 'Why, if I had, I should not have conquered India; the black knaves would have led me astray by their cunning advice; but as I never understood them, I was never misled by them.'" See Lewis Ferdinand Smith, *The Tale of the Four Durwesh: Translated from the Urdu Tongue of Meer Ummun Dhailee* (Lucknow: Newul Kishore Press, 1895), p. 111.
24. See William F. P. Napier. *The Conquest of Scinde* (London: T. & W. Boone, 1845), pp. 327–369.
25. Thomas Postans, *Personal Observations on Sindh; the Manners and Customs of Its Inhabitants; and Its Productive Capabilities: With a Sketch of Its History, a Narrative of Recent Events, and an Account of the Connection of the British Government with That Country to the Present Period* (London: Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, 1843), p. 334.
26. For the role of the opium trade in Sind's annexation, see J. Y. Wong, "British Annexation of Sind in 1843: An Economic Perspective," *Modern Asian Studies* vol. 31, no. 2 (May 1997), pp. 225–244.
27. The political resistance to Sind's annexation was led by the political agents James Outram and J.B. Eastwick. See William Joseph Eastwick, *Speeches of Captain Eastwick on the Sinde Question, the India Bill of 1858* (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1862), p. 1. A reaction to their critique was apparent from the popularity of "*Peccavi!* (I have Scinde/I have *sinned*)" the apocryphal pun assigned to Napier (in reality, a London *Punch* cartoon). It sums up the popular reaction to Sind's annexation.
28. See Marianne Postans, "Daughters of King Dahir: A Romance of History," *The Metropolitan Magazine 38* (London: Saunders and Outley, May to August 1843), pp. 225–242.
29. James McMurdo, "An Account of the Country of Sindh; with Remarks on the State of Society, the Government, Manners, and Customs of the People," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, vol. 1 (1834), pp. 233–258.
30. Ibid., p. 251.
31. Thomas Postans, *Personal Observations on Scinde*, pp. 158–160.
32. Ibid., p. 149.
33. Ibid., p. 151.
34. Richard F. Burton, *Scinde; or, The Unhappy Valley*, vol. 1 (London: Richard Bentley, 1851), p. 125.
35. Ibid., pp. 131–1.

36. *The Conquest of Scinde*, p. 37.
37. See Ronald B. Inden, *Imagining India* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), pp. 49–85.
38. Mountstuart Elphinstone, *The History of India: The Hindu and Mahometan Periods* (London: John Murray, 1841), p. ix.
39. Ibid., p. 300.
40. Ibid.
41. Ibid., p. 301.
42. Ibid., p. 309.
43. For a summary of his career and his position in historiography, see Tripta Wahi, "Henry Miers Elliot: A Reappraisal," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* no. 1 (1990), pp. 64–90.
44. H. M. Elliot, *The History of India, as Told by Its Own Historians: The Muhammadan Period*, vol. 1 (London: Trübner and Co., 1867), p. xvi.
45. Ibid., p. xxii.
46. Ibid., p. 136.
47. Ibid., p. 414.
48. Ibid., p. 433.
49. Ibid., p. 482.
50. Ibid., p. 479.
51. Ibid.
52. For a full explication of Smith's text, see Ronald B. Inden, *Imagining India*.
53. Stanley Lane-Poole, *Medieval India under Mohammedan Rule, 712–1764* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1903), p. iii.
54. Ibid., p. 7.
55. Vincent A. Smith, *The Oxford Student's History of India* (London: Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1908), p. 88.
56. J. N. Sarkar, *India through the Ages* (Calcutta: M. C. Sarkar & Sons, 1928), pp. 68–70.
57. R. C. Majumdar, *The Arab Invasion of India* (Madras: Diocesan Press, 1931), p. 167.
58. Ibid., p. 168.
59. Sulaiman Nadvi, *Tarikh-i Sind* (Aligarh: Dar al Musanafin, 1970), p. 13.
60. Mohammad Habib, "Arab Conquest of Sind," in *Politics and Society during the Early Medieval Period: Collected Works of Professor Muhammad Habib*, vol. 2, K. A. Nizami, ed. (Aligarh: People's Publishing House, 1981), pp. 1–35.
61. Ibid., p. 23.
62. *Five Years of Pakistan (August 1947–August 1952)* (Karachi: Pakistan Publications, 1953), p. 29.
63. Tariq Rahman, "Education in Pakistan: A Survey," in *Pakistan on the Brink: Politics, Economics, and Society*, Craig Baxter, ed. (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2004), p. 173.
64. An excellent overview of this debate is in Ayesha Jalal, "Conjuring Pakistan: History as Official Imaging," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 27(1), Feb. 1995, pp. 73–89.
65. *Social Studies for Class 6* (Lahore: Punjab Textbook Board, 2003), p. 72.
66. *Civics for Class IX and X* (Lahore: Punjab Textbook Board, 2001), pp. 19–20.

67. *Social Studies for Class 6*, p. 97.
68. Ibid., p. 97.
69. *Daily Dawn* (Karachi), Oct. 4, 2006, p. A9.
70. Ali Asghar Chaudhri, *Mujahid-e Azam Hazrat Muhammad b. Qasim kay Rufka Shami Mujahideen yani Pak o Hind ki Qaum 'Arain ki Dastan* (Lahore: Ilmi Kutb Khana, 1963), p. 418.
71. Catherine B. Asher and Cynthia Talbot, *India before Europe* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 18.

CONCLUSION

1. A. K. Ramanujan, "Is There an Indian Way of Thinking? An Informal Essay," in *Contributions to Indian Sociology* 23, 1 (1989), pp. 41–58.
2. William Napier Bruce, *Life of General Charles Napier* (London: John Murray, 1885), p. 300.

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